

# Level 2 Basketball

The Level 2 Basketball training is designed for Special Olympics Minnesota coaches who would like to become a Level 2 basketball coach and/or for volunteers who would like information about Special Olympics Minnesota basketball. This training counts as Level 2 certification and/or recertification for three years from the date this training is completed.

This training will cover Special Olympics Minnesota's basketball events, rules, competitions, the divisioning process, registration and basketball resources.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Coaching Special Olympics Athletes

Coaching Special Olympics Athletes prepares Special Olympics coaches to use their sport-specific knowledge in coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities. This course meets the Special Olympics standards and competencies for coach certification. For veteran Special Olympics coaches, this course serves as a reminder of the essentials sometimes forgotten after years of coaching. For new Special Olympics coaches, this course will help prepare you for your first role in coaching Special Olympics athletes.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Coaching Special Olympics Athletes

*The better the coach ...*

*the better the experiences ...*

*the better the athlete!*



**Special Olympics**  
Minnesota



# Course Overview

*This course will cover specific topics related to:*

**1 - The Athlete**

**3 - Preparing for  
& Coaching During  
Competition**



**2 - Teaching &  
Training**

**4 - Managing the Program**



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 - The Athlete

## *Important Considerations concerning Special Olympics Athletes*

### Psychological Issues (Learning)

Medical  
Issues



Social  
Issues

**Special Olympics**  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 - Psychological Considerations

## Motivation – helping athletes maintain interest

- May have shorter attention span; harder to keep independently “on task”.
- May be motivated more by short-term rather than long-term goals.
- May learn better with more frequent positive reinforcement.

## Perception – helping athletes understand the sport in which they are participating

- May have impairments in sight or hearing.
- May have difficulty focusing attention on the appropriate object or task.



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 - Psychological Considerations

**Comprehension** – helping athletes remember and perform the skill they have learned (*Understanding*)

- May find it difficult to understand purely verbal explanations of new skills. Often find it easier to learn through visual demonstrations and physical prompts.
- May have difficulty in understanding complex, multi-part actions or explanations.
- Often take a longer time between learning one piece of information and the next (learning plateau)
- Less able to generalize skills learned in one situation to a different situation.
- Use of written instructions may be more helpful than verbal, depending on the situation

## Memory/Flexibility

- May need frequent repetition and reminders in order to remember a concept or skill



**Special Olympics**  
Minnesota



# Unit 1 - Psychological Challenges

Each psychological item has its challenge and action:

Psychological Item	Challenge	Action
Perception	Easily distracted by noise	Control surroundings
Motivation	Easily discouraged, or having a feeling of failure	Focus on positive, appropriate reinforcement, catch the athlete doing well
Memory/Flexibility	Difficulty applying skills in different environments	Practice skills in different settings or different orders
Comprehension	Difficulty learning through verbal explanation or lengthy instructions	Add demonstrations, hands-on walkthroughs of skills, keeping instructions clear and concise

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 - Medical Considerations

## Down Syndrome

- Approximately 10% of individuals with Down Syndrome have a condition called Atlanto-axial instability, which is a mal-alignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition may cause possible injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.
- Prohibited sports – equestrian, gymnastics, diving, pentathlon, butterfly and dive starts in swimming, high jump, alpine/snowboarding, squat lift and soccer.

## Medications

- Understand that athletes may be taking medications that have physical side effects
- Consult with head coach / HOD if concerns arise



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 - Medical Considerations



## Seizures

- The number of Special Olympics athletes with seizure disorders is higher than traditional athletes
- Assist athlete to safe space around them, protect their head and neck, lay on side

## Physical Disabilities

- Some athletes also have physical disabilities which may affect the sports they can participate in or the methods of teaching a coach must use. Special Olympics has events for individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers or other assistance.
- Muscle strength may be needed for particular sports and some athletes may not have the strength for those sports. This might be due to lack of use or a permanent disability.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 - Medical Considerations

## Autism

- Approximately 20% of athletes have an autism diagnosis
- ~50% of people with autism are non-verbal



## Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

- These athletes consistently function better on performance tasks compared with verbal tasks. The more concrete the task, the better the performance.
- Tend to have poor verbal comprehension skills, despite being comfortable and chatty around people. These athletes will also tend to have attention and memory deficits and often display poor judgment in distinguishing right from wrong.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 – Medical Consideration for each Diagnosis

Diagnosis	See the challenge that correlates with the appropriate diagnosis.
Down Syndrome	Family should ensure the athlete is screened for Atlanto-axial instability (see medical if necessary)
Seizure Disorder	Be prepared to protect and observe the athlete should a seizure occur and minimize adverse affects
Autism spectrum disorder	Understand that athletes will engage in self-stimulatory behavior (hand-flapping, jumping, etc.), and that it is not necessarily a problem
Attention deficit/hyperactivity	Shorten drills and provide one-to-one assistance when needed
Fetal alcohol syndrome	Demonstrate concrete performance tasks

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 - Social Considerations

## Social Skills

- May lack basic social/interactive/adaptive skills
- May lack language interpretation

## Recreation at Home

- May lack physical activity
- May lack encouragement/motivation

## Economic Status

- May lack financial means
- May not have access to independent transportation



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 1 - Social considerations

All the following social consideration(s) may impact an athlete's participation in Special Olympics:

- Inappropriate responses to social situations
- Lack of at-home support
- Extreme lack of endurance
- Lack of access to transportation

Our challenge as coaches is to develop a full understanding of our athletes and the strengths and weaknesses they bring with them to a Special Olympics program. By doing so we can begin to develop a training and competition program that they will benefit from and enjoy.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 2 – Teaching & Training the Athlete



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 2 - Teaching & Training the Athlete

There are many ways to organize a training session for Special Olympics athletes. Because of some of the things previously identified concerning comprehension and memory, there is considerable value in developing a consistent training routine that provides familiarity, stability, and comfort.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



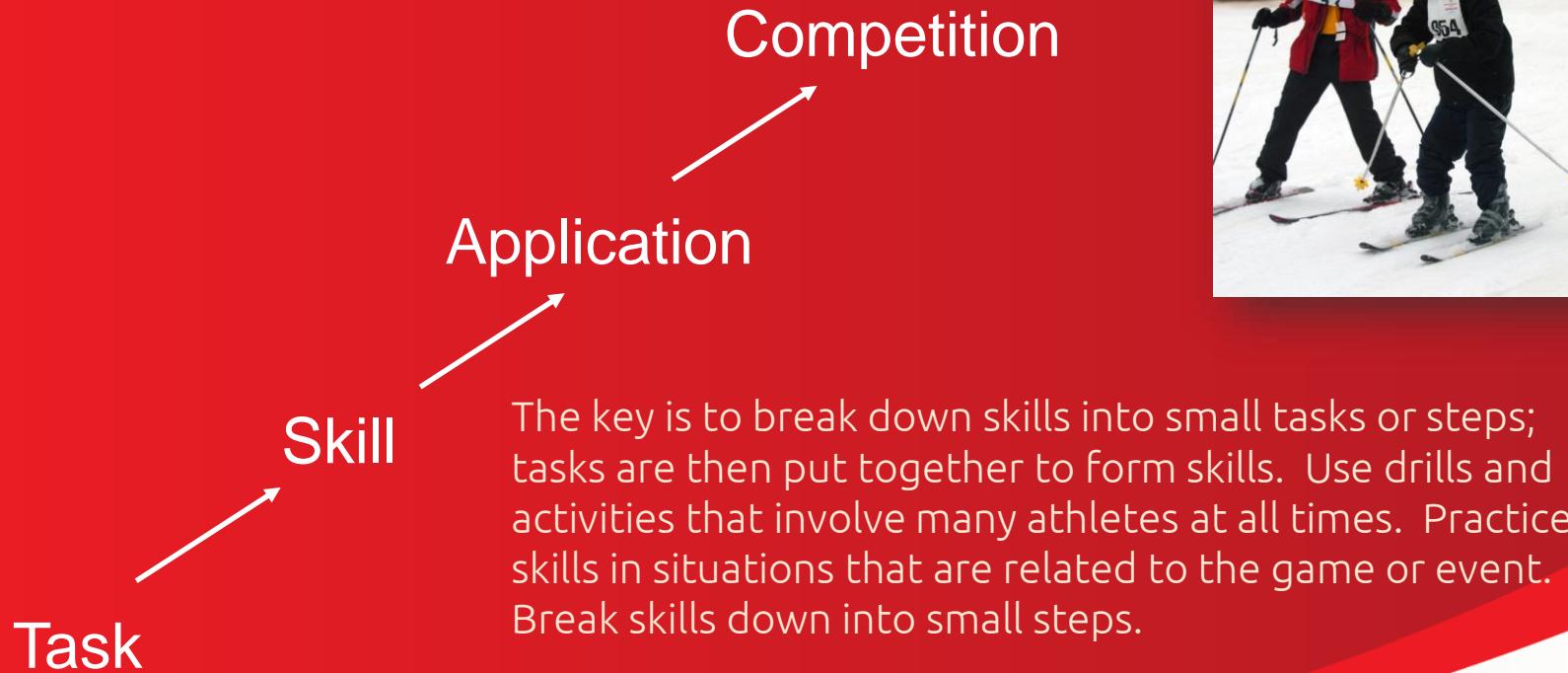
# Unit 2 - Organizing a Training Session

Component and Details	Layout of Drill or Activity
Warm-Up & Stretching	Specific to the sport, repetitive and involve athletes in leading activity
Skills Instruction	Break skills into smaller tasks, involve many athletes at a time and practice skills related to event situations
Competition Experience	Scrimmage, simulate event/game situations and work towards what the competition will look like
Cool-Down, Stretch, & Reward	Playing a game related to that sport and ending each training with a cool down activity and stretch

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 2 - Training Sequence



***Special Olympics***  
Minnesota



# Unit 2 - Training Sequence

What's the challenge and how to fix it?

Training Sequence Element	Challenge	Action
Application	Acquire ability to repeatedly demonstrate sport competencies in different situations & environments	Provide gamelike drills or situations
Skills	Acquire ability to perform series of sport competencies effectively and necessary to perform a sport	Work on essential sport competencies to perform the sport
Competition	Acquire ability to put essential sport competencies into practice	Provide scrimmage opportunities in practice
Tasks	Acquire ability to perform essential sport competencies	Break essential sport competencies down into individual parts

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 2 - Communication

Communication is key to immediately reinforcing desired behavior; there are several key words that begin with a “C”, which address what a coach should say.

- Clear
- Concrete
- Concise
- Consistent
- Command-oriented



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



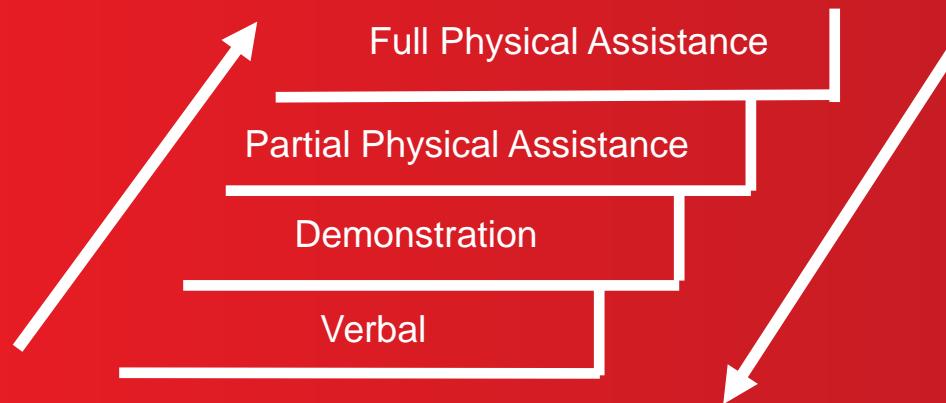
# Unit 2 - Communication

Communication Criteria	Description	Sport Example
Concise	Use a few key words that cue a desired action	"Go to the free throw line" Showing an athlete where to stand on defense
Consistent	Use the same word or phrase for the same action	Coach constantly say "Breathe" – teaching an athlete when to take a breath in aquatics
Clear	Use easy to understand words that have one meaning	"Swing the bat" teaching how/when to swing.
Command-Oriented	Use words that elicit or reinforce a desired action	"On your mark. Set. Go." Using this phrase for starts in athletics.
Concrete	Connect words to something defined or tangible	"Jump forward" when coaching an athlete in the long jump.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 2 - Levels of Assistance



Each athlete needs to be met where he or she is and with what each individual is ready to do. It is important to use the appropriate level of instruction and assistance.

- The lower the ability athlete, the more assistance may be required
- Verbal should always be accompanied by demonstration
- Partial physical assistance may be needed to help the athlete get positioned properly
- When all else fails, take the athlete through the complete motion

***Special Olympics***  
Minnesota



# Unit 2 - Level of Instruction or Assistance

<b>Level of Instruction or Assistance</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sport Example</b>
Full Physical Assistance	Help the athlete through the entire motion of the skill	Volleyball: coach makes an adjustment to the athlete's arm swing by moving the athlete's arm through the entire spiking movement
Verbal	Tell the athlete what to do	Footwork: "run forward to the line; then return, running backward"
Demonstration	Show the athlete the proper technique	Soccer: one athlete shoots on goal while another watches
Partial Physical Assistance	Place the athlete's hands in the proper position	Golf: coach physically adjusts the athlete's hands on the golf club with the correct grip

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 2 - Managing Athlete Behavior

The goal is for coaches to meet each athlete where he/she is and treat him/her accordingly. However, a coach may often have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic ... not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior, the inappropriate behavior may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating in the moment.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 2 - Managing Athlete Behavior

Athlete Behavior Characteristics	Strategies to Improve Learning
Swimmer has a short attention span	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dwell on a stroke or activity for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task</li><li>2. Provide different opportunities for repetition and review, which is the key to gaining new skill.</li><li>3. Work one-on-one to gain full attention.</li></ol>
Basketball athlete yells if he/she misses a shot	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Emphasize the other aspects of the game besides shooting</li><li>2. Work on shooting drills without a hoop</li><li>3. Begin to shoot at a hoop but in a non-game setting with a one-on-one coach</li></ol>
Bowler doesn't wait their turn	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have a coach at the lane help with the order of bowlers, explain whose turn it is</li><li>2. Have the bowler wait with a coach behind the bowling area until their turn is up</li><li>3. Emphasize the order and that the bowler will always follow the same individual</li></ol>

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 3 - Preparing & Coaching for Competition

- A key goal of Special Olympics is to provide an opportunity for all athletes to experience success in competitions.
- A Special Olympics athlete can benefit from many aspects of a competition (including meeting new people, participating in the festivities of Opening Ceremonies and other social events, the excitement of traveling to new places and staying away from home, etc.). None of these things, however, should be as important to the coach as the focus on the participation in the competition itself.

This section highlights ways to improve the quality of an athlete's competition experience.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

## ▪ Registration

- Provide accurate entry and team roster information, qualifying times, and skills assessment scores.
- Help the Competition Committee prepare a successful competition for your athletes by meeting their registration deadlines.

## ▪ Official competition rules

- A good Competition Committee will instruct its officials/referees to enforce the Official Special Olympics Rules. Make sure you know them.
- Teach your athletes the rules and, during training, phase out your verbal reminders about rules. At competition, coaches may have little or no opportunity to assist athletes when they are not following the rules. (A coach cannot be on the track with them!)



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

- **Supervision**

- Discuss the challenges associated with participating in competition away from home, and why adequate, non-coaching support personnel are needed.
  - Transportation
  - Lodging (need for same-sex supervision)
  - Social activities
  - Coaches meetings (who will supervise athletes during these?)
  - Multiple events to supervise, awards ceremonies, etc.
- Design a supervision worksheet with the essential elements covered.



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

## Travel and overnight

- Discuss overnight concerns with parents or group-home supervisors.
- Write up a simple checklist of items to bring and distribute to athletes and parents
- Make sure that all special medication needs are understood. Coaches may have to assist with handling medications. Have all medical forms and information readily available at all times.
- Work out the most effective rooming arrangements, taking into account athlete choice, behavioral and personality clashes, etc.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

## Guidelines for success:

Teach responsibility & independence

- Assist athletes in dressing appropriately, understanding what is happening at the competition site, maintaining a focused attitude and appropriate behavior.

Arrive early

- Allow time for putting on uniforms, warm-up and stretching routine and focusing on the competition.

Encourage maximum effort in divisioning & competition

- Applying the “honest-effort” rule from the Special Olympics Rule book

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

## Guidelines for success:

Let athletes compete without direct supervision

- Not running down the side of the track shouting instructions, allowing the competition officials to conduct the competition and allowing athletes to make mistakes and helping them learn from their mistakes.

Make any official protests calmly

- If you think there is a valid reason to protest the outcome, do so in a calm manner, following the competition guidelines and not involving athletes in disputes with officials.

Help athletes learn from winning & losing

- Deal graciously and realistically with winning and losing. Focus on effort made, recognize accomplishments and new skills that were performed and taking something positive away from the experience.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

The coach can be the key person who makes any competition experience a good one. Taking time to adequately prepare for competition and plan for on-site supervision and that coaching is time well spent.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 4 – Managing the Program

The successful Special Olympics coach:

## **Is sports and coaching knowledgeable**

- Special Olympics is a sport organization
- Technical knowledge of the sport and how to teach it is essential if coaches are to effectively help athletes improve their sport skills and truly benefit from Special Olympics.
- Successful coaches are constantly looking for opportunities to learn more about the sport.

## **Is Special Olympics knowledgeable**

- Special Olympics has a clearly defined mission, philosophy, and rules that have been developed through years of worldwide experience with athletes with intellectual disabilities.
- A better understanding of these will benefit your athletes.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 4 – Managing the Program

The successful Special Olympics coach:

## **Recruits and trains assistant coaches**

- Individualized coach-athlete teaching is key to successful training in Special Olympics.
- Assistant coaches can be recruited to help provide individualized attention.
- Assistant coaches are useful only if they are trained and coordinated at practice.

## **Recruits and trains athletes**

- A coach is also a promoter and recruiter; always tries to expand participation

## **Assists with appropriate sport selection**

- Age appropriate, is the athlete able to participate safely and successfully and does the athlete have a choice of participating in a different sport or event.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 4 – The Successful Special Olympics coach:

Offers activities for all abilities

- In order to accommodate a range of abilities

Puts a priority on safety

- This is the coach's number one priority

Conducts high-quality training and competition

- Appropriate training, activities such as training days or camps, helps develop pride in being an athlete and organizes competition opportunities if none exist

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 4 – The Successful Special Olympics coach:

Involves families

- Educates families and group-home providers about the benefits of Special Olympics, appropriate nutrition and food choices and training at home.

Assists with community inclusion

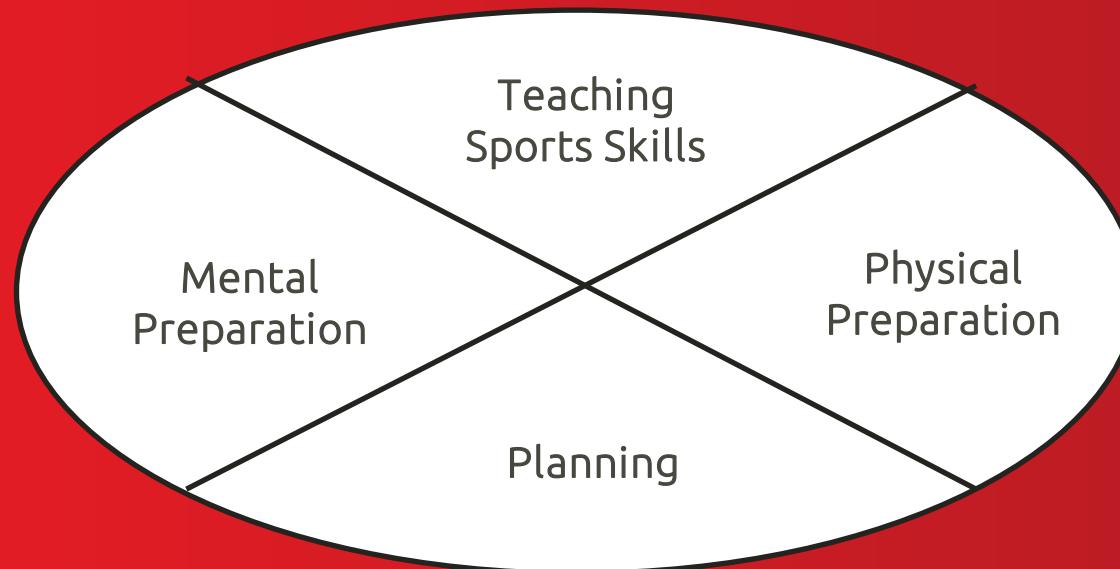
- Improves social and communication skills, opportunities to talk about Special Olympics at civic functions and assistance in joining non-Special Olympics sports opportunities

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unit 4 – Area of Focus

## Athlete Safety



## Coaching Philosophy

***Special Olympics***  
Minnesota



# Unit 4 – Preparation



***Special Olympics***  
Minnesota



# Improved Performance & Well-Being

- TRAINING ⇒ the key
- COMPETITION ⇒ the means
- OUTCOMES ⇒ skill, confidence, courage, & joy
- GOAL ⇒ better preparation for life
- RESULTS ⇒ lifelong skills, acceptance & increased independence



*Let's Get After It and Get It Done!*

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Level 2 Basketball

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Level 2 Basketball

Coach ratio per team:

Athletes	Level II	Level I
3-4	1	0
5-8	1	1
9-12	1	2
13-16	1	3



**Roster size:**

Half-court - 4-7 athletes

Full-court - 6-16 athletes

Unified - 6-16 athletes and partners (must have two partners and three athletes on the floor at all times).

All Coaches and Unified Partners must complete the Level 1 certification prior to their participation with a team. Level 1 certification requires a Volunteer Application and Level 1 online training and both items are found [here](#).

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# SOMN Basketball Events

Special Olympics Minnesota Basketball Events

**Individual Skills and Unified skills** - athletes compete in skill stations in shooting, passing and dribbling

**Half-court Basketball** - 3 vs 3 (4-7 athletes per team)

**Full-court Basketball** - 5 vs 5 (6-16 athletes per team)

**Unified Basketball** - individuals with and without intellectual disabilities compete on the same team, 5 vs 5 (6-16 athletes/unified partners)

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unified Individual Skills

Individuals will practice as a unified pair. Both athlete and unified partner will go through the skills event together. Teammates will not be allowed to physically assist athletes during the skills drills. Both athlete and partner will go through skills together but receive separate skills scores which will be combined for a final team score.

Individual Skills Events offered at:

- Regional competition
- State competition



***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unified Individual Skills

Partners that compete in Individual Skills must participate in Individual Skills at practice and record their score on the registration form. Each athlete and unified partner must complete the Target Pass, Spot Shot, and Dribble (Ten-meter dribble or Speed dribble, the speed station is for athletes who have difficulty with 10 meter dribble).

**Target Pass** - five attempts to pass a basketball 2.4 meters from the wall towards a 1 x 1 meter square. Target Pass measures an athlete's skill in passing a basketball.

**Spot Shot** - six spots near the basket are marked for athletes to shoot twice from each spot. Spot Shot measures an athlete's skill in shooting a basketball.

**Dribble** - Dribble measures an athlete's skill in dribbling a basketball. Two options are available, Speed dribble is designed for athletes in a wheelchair or that need assistance.

**Ten-meter** - two attempts to dribble 10 meters, the faster attempt is scored.

**Speed** - Athletes dribble and are scored based on how many times they successfully dribble in the circle within 60 seconds.

*At practice you may use this Individual Skills scoresheet to record an athlete's score. The SOI Basketball Rules list the dimensions for each skill station.*

**Special Olympics**  
*Minnesota*



# Half Court

3 vs 3 half-court basketball teams must have four – seven athletes on a team.

Half-court Events offered at:

Regional competition - no game fees, additional competition experience for teams

State competition

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



## Game Structure

- Max of 7 players per roster. A team needs to start the game with the minimum number of required players (3) filled to avoid a forfeit. If an injury occurs during a game, they can drop to one short and continue that game. If a team drops to one player short during the game due to any other reason besides injury, the game results in a forfeit.
- Game begins with a coin flip. 20- minute game play or 20 points whichever comes first. Stop time only in the last minute.
- Stop time – the clock is stopped whenever the ball goes out of bounds, a foul is called, free throws are being shot, and during time outs. When the ball is inbound, the clock starts once a player touches the ball.
- Athletes must enter the game at least once. There is no minimum time requirement that an athlete is required to play.
- Overtime – three-minute, stop time only in the last minute. It is still the first team to 20 points. If tied after OT, then first basket wins sudden death.
- Substitutions on dead balls only.
- Travel/Double Dribble – see Full Court rule.
- Time-outs – two 30-second per game, one in OT (no carryover). Game clock stops during time-outs.
- Field goals – Two-point field goals and three-point field goals are awarded.
- Technical fouls will be assessed for teams who excessively cross the free throw extended line at the referee's discretion
- Technical foul results in two points and possession of the ball

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



## Starting a Dead-ball Possession

Dead-ball possession - occur when the game starts, when there is a timeout, made basket, foul, violation, injury, out of bounds or anytime the official blows their whistle

Offense starting dead-ball possessions - these possessions start at the top of the key (which is the area by the top of the three-point line). The offensive player must pass the ball in to start all dead-ball possessions.

Defense on dead-ball possessions - defensive players must stay behind the free throw line and the taped line extended from the free throw line to the out of bounds line. Once the ball has been passed in by the offensive player, the defense can cross the free throw line.

## Starting a Live-Ball Possession

Live-Ball Possession - on any live-ball change of possession (steal, rebound), the team gaining possession must return the ball to the free throw line extended to start their offensive possession. During the course of taking the ball back past this line, the opposing team may defend the player(s) handling the ball at any time during this transition.

- *Therefore, teams are not allowed "free backs" on a live-ball change of possession.*
- *The defense is entitled to take any legal actions to try and regain possession of the ball, however, should they gain possession of the ball, they will be required to bring it back past the line to reestablish their possession*
- *Points will be not scored by illegal put-backs during change of possession. Team making the illegal shot will result in a turn over-change of possession*

**Special Olympics**  
Minnesota



## Violations

Travel - an extra two steps is allowed as long as an athlete doesn't gain an advantage (i.e. an athlete travels from the left side of the basket to the right to shoot; or an athlete travels to get out of a double team)

Double dribble - the officials will initially give a warning to the athlete but then call a violation after the initial warning

Three-second in-the-lane violation - the officials will give warnings to the athletes

## Fouls

Personal and team fouls are called but not recorded - when a foul is called, play stops and starts over as a dead ball possession.

Free throws - no free throws are shot at any time

Fouled and made basket - if a player is fouled while shooting and a basket is made, the basket counts and the team that made the basket regains possession.

Technical Foul - two points and the ball are awarded to the no violation team

Aggressive play - all officials are trained to call all fouls

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Full Court

5 vs 5 full-court basketball teams must have 6-16 athletes on a team.

Full-court Events offered at:

Regional competition - no game fees, additional competition experience for teams

State competition

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



## Game Structure

- A team needs to start the game with the minimum number of required players (five) to avoid a forfeit. If an injury occurs during a game, they can drop to one player short and continue that game. If a team drops to one player short during the game due to any other reason besides injury, the game results in a forfeit.
- Two–18 min. halves, first half run time (clock will only stop on timeouts and injury), second half run time with last two minutes stop time.
- Athletes must enter the game. There is no minimum time requirement that an athlete is required to play
- If point differential exceeds 20 points in the second half, the game will go to running time until the differential becomes 10 points or less
- Overtime—three minutes, stop time in the last minute. If tied after that, sudden death will be played and first team to score wins.
- Substitutions on dead balls only.
- Travel—an extra step is given, as long as it doesn't give an advantage (example – towards the basket or out of a double team)
- Stop time—the clock is stopped whenever the ball goes out of bounds, a foul is called, free throws are being shot, and during time outs. When the ball is inbound, the clock starts once a player touches the ball
- Timeouts—four 30-second time-outs per game, one time-out in overtime (no timeout carry over). Technical fouls will be assessed for calling timeouts when none are available.
- Defense - all types of defense are allowed at any time; full-court press, zone, trap, person-to-person, etc
- Jump balls - starts the game and held balls result in alternating possession.
- Basketballs - regulation men's basketball for all games.  
younger players can use a women's basketball for games.

Teams with

**Special Olympics**  
*Minnesota*



## Fouls

Shooting fouls - results in fouled player attempting free throws

Personal fouls - fifth personal foul on one player and they foul out of the game

Team fouls - seventh team foul results in a one-and-one bonus; tenth team foul results in a double bonus.

Technical foul - two free throws and the ball

Aggressive play - all officials are trained to call all fouls

Travel - an extra step is allowed as long as an athlete doesn't gain an advantage

Double dribble - the officials will initially give a warning to the athlete but then call a violation after the initial warning

Three-second in-the-lane violation - the officials will initially give a warning to the athlete but then call a violation after the initial warning

## Additional Items

- No foul language, jewelry, watches, or head wear (sweatbands are allowed) during play. Medical alerts allowed but must be taped down.
- Warm up your team off the court. Only if time allows can you do a warm-up on the court.
- Recommended jersey numbers for full, half and Unified: 0-5, 10-15, 20-25, 30-35, 40-45, 50-55
- All coaches must coach from their team bench. Only one standing coach allowed. Only the appropriate number of coaches (based on athlete-coach ratio) will be allowed on the bench
- Only registered coaches are allowed to approach score table or referees. Spectators will be warned and at the discretion of referees and games committee will be ejected from competition.
- If a team forfeits a game at a tournament, they will automatically receive last place in the division. If a team forfeits 50% or more of their games they will receive a participation award.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unified Basketball

Unified Basketball consists of individuals with and without an intellectual disability competing on the same team.

5 vs 5 Unified full-court basketball teams must have 6-16 athletes/partners on a team. Unified Basketball is a great way for athletes to learn the game of basketball while having a partner teach them skills on the court during a game.

## Unified Basketball Events:

**Regional competition** - great opportunity to participate in a Unified Basketball tournament before State  
**State competition**

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



## Game Structure

- Lineup - three athletes and two partners on the court at all times. If a team doesn't adhere to this ratio, they may play the game but it will be counted as a forfeit.  
\*\*Teams are required to register at least 3 Unified Partners for Regional and State.
- Rules - same rules as full-court basketball are used
- A team needs to start the game with the minimum number of required players (five) to avoid a forfeit. If an injury occurs during a game, they can drop to one player short and continue that game. If a team drops to one player short during the game due to any other reason besides injury, the game results in a forfeit.

## Coaches

**Coach Ratio** - teams are required to adhere to the coach ratio based on the number of athletes on a team

Coaches Competing as Unified Partners - a coach that is registered for the Unified tournament as a coach can not enter the game and compete. But if a coach would like to compete as a partner they can do so as long as they are registered as a partner.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unified Basketball Color Model

## GREEN – no scoring ratio

Athletes and partners should be of similar skill level and ability. Does not matter how many points are scored by the athletes or partners. Athletes or partners may score a majority of a team's total points.

## YELLOW – Unified Partners 50% max

Unified Partners are at a higher skill level. Partners can score up to 50% of their team's total score. At the conclusion of the game, if partners score more than 50% of their team's total points then the scorer's table will subtract partners' points from the team's total until it is a 50-50 ratio with the athlete's points scored. The yellow category is for teams where skill levels can vary but teams are still looking to have a competitive experience.

## RED – Unified Partners 25% max

Unified Partners are at a higher skill level. Partners can score up to 25% of their team's total score. At the conclusion of the game, if partners score more than 25% of their team's total points then the scorer's table will subtract partners' points from the team's total until it is a 25-75 ratio with the athlete's points scored. The red category is typically lower skill-levels or athletes/Unified partners who are still learning the game. This category is more for teams looking for the team experience and not as much winning and losing.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Unified Scoring at Tournaments & Registering

**Contesting Scoring Ratio** - coaches may contest the ratio of the score but this must take place within five minutes of the conclusion of the game. Tournament director must be present for any contest. This must be done at the tournament headquarters and not the score table.

*A team will not lose a game if a partner falls outside of the approved ratio (which has happened in previous years). Now if teams fall outside of their designated color level's scoring ratio their team's total points will be adjusted according to the color they are in.*

- *EXAMPLE: Team A is in the YELLOW level and partners score 18 out of their teams 30 total points. At the conclusion of the game event staff would subtract points from the partners until they fall in the approved ratio. As a result, Team A's final score would be 24 points (6 pts subtracted from the partners original 18 scored means the updated approved scoring allows the partners to score 12 of the teams total 24 points).*

**Registration** – HOD/Coaches register for their color level on the quota form. Once registration closes, we may need to move a team to a different color level based on divisioning and the number of teams that registered; but our emphasis will be to make sure that a team's experience and skill level are similar to the teams they will compete against.

**Special Olympics**  
Minnesota



# Divisioning and Registration

## Team Sport Divisioning Philosophy

*The divisioning process for team sports is much different, and much harder, than individual sports. Unlike most individual sports, team sports do not have concrete distances or times that can be used, although we do have teams submit assessment scores for individual players. Once a game starts, however, the information contained in the assessments often takes a back seat to the dynamics at play minute-by-minute, play-by-play on the court or field.*

*The challenge with divisioning team sports is that there are many factors that affect how a team performs on any given day — missing players, illness, penalties, behavior, coaching, who's hot and who's not, individual match ups, etc. With divisioning in team sports, much more emphasis is put on game results, common opponents, coach rankings and coach notes. There is not a perfect science to ensure that all divisions will have close games, which is why we have developed a process for team sports that includes divisioning committees. The divisioning committees allow for more coach involvement, better team evaluation and improved divisioning. We recognize there may be some games during a competition that are not competitive, but we hope that the team sports divisioning process creates the most equal divisions possible.*

**Special Olympics**  
Minnesota



# Divisioning and Registration

## Basketball Divisioning

Divisioning is based on age, athlete skill assessment scores and team information from coaches. Each team is required to submit an assessment score for each athlete as well as a team information page.

## Registration

Registration is done [online](#) by Heads of Delegation or Head Coaches. In order to register online the coach must have a username and password. If you need help with registration please contact [sports@somn.org](mailto:sports@somn.org).

When a coach registers a team they must submit the following:

- Assessment score for each athlete/partner (see above)

- Coaches on each team

- Athletes/partners must have appropriate paperwork submitted in order to register

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Competition Information

Region	Date	Location	City	Quota Due	Register by
North	March 26	Trifecta	Duluth	February 18	March 4
West	April 21	Kennedy Secondary School	Fergus Falls	March 10	March 31
South	April 23	St. Clair K-12 Building	St. Clair	March 13	April 1
Metro	April 23	Rogers High School	Rogers	March 13	April 1
Metro	May 1	Hastings High School	Hastings	March 20	April 8
State	June 25-26	Stillwater High School	Stillwater	May 15	June 5

With questions or concerns, contact [sports@somn.org](mailto:sports@somn.org).

- Full Court Roster Size – 6 minimum, 16 maximum
- Half Court Roster Size – 4 minimum, 7 maximum
- Unified Roster Size – three unified partners minimum, 6 players minimum, 16 maximum
- Awards are presented as divisions finish
- Athletes can only participate in one basketball event due to conflicting schedules

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# SOMN Health Programs

SOMN offers health programs to integrate into your sports season to enhance your athletes performance, health, nutritional knowledge and overall wellbeing.

- SOFit- unified approach to improving and protecting health and wellness for people with and without intellectual disabilities. Comprehensive, 360 degree look at wellness and human spirit.
  - 8 weeks, unified pairs
  - Coaches lead educational topics including: cooking, healthy grocery shopping, importance of varying workouts, healthy beverage choices.
  - Customizable to groups interest
  - Four pillars of wellness: physical, nutrition, emotional and social.
  - Coaches Manual includes all lessons and activities. Athlete Playbook allows athletes to track lessons and activities.

Questions? Want materials?

Contact Kelsey Sparks | Health Programs Coordinator [Kelsey.sparks@somn.org](mailto:Kelsey.sparks@somn.org)

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# SOMN Health Programs

SOMN offers health programs to integrate into your sports season to enhance your athlete's performance, health, nutritional knowledge and overall wellbeing.

- Fit5
  - Plan for physical activity, nutrition and hydration
  - Recommending 5 days of physical activity, 5 fruits and vegetables and 5 bottles of water
  - Fitness cards offer exercises to challenge abilities. These can be done at practice, the gym and home.
  - Build your practice using fitness cards to focus on endurance, flexibility, and strength
  - Athlete handbook to track progress and follow program at home

[Start now! Fit5 Guide and Training Cards](#)

Questions? Want materials?

Contact Kelsey Sparks | Health Programs Coordinator [Kelsey.sparks@somn.org](mailto:Kelsey.sparks@somn.org)

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Practice, Skill Development & Resources

Special Olympics Minnesota wants to make sure that you have confidence in your knowledge of basketball rules, skills and practice ideas. Listed below are Special Olympics basketball resources that can help with the training and skill development for athletes.

[Special Olympics Minnesota Handbook and Rules](#)

Special Olympics, Inc Basketball Resources

[Coaching Guide](#)

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Coach Recognition Item

Each coach that becomes Level 2 certified or recertified in a sport is able to order one coach item per calendar year. Information can be found [HERE](#).

Please note that if you have not completed a Level 2 training or recertification course, or you have already received an item for the year, you will not be shipped an item.

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*



# Level 2 Basketball Quiz

Level 2 certification is not processed until you have completed the Level 2 quiz.

To take the Level 2 Basketball quiz please [click here.](#)

***Special Olympics***  
*Minnesota*

