

Level 2 Poly Hockey

The Level 2 Poly Hockey training is designed for Special Olympics Minnesota coaches who would like to become a Level 2 Poly Hockey coach and/or for volunteers who would like information about Special Olympics Minnesota Poly Hockey. 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 Poly Hockey events, rules, competitions, the divisioning process, registration and Poly Hockey resources.

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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.

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Coaching Special Olympics Athletes

*The better the coach ...
the better the experiences ...
the better the athlete!*



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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



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Unit 1 - The Athlete

Important Considerations concerning Special Olympics Athletes

Psychological Issues
(*Learning*)

Medical
Issues



Social
Issues

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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.



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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



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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

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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



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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.

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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.

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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

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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



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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.

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Unit 2 – Teaching & Training the Athlete



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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.

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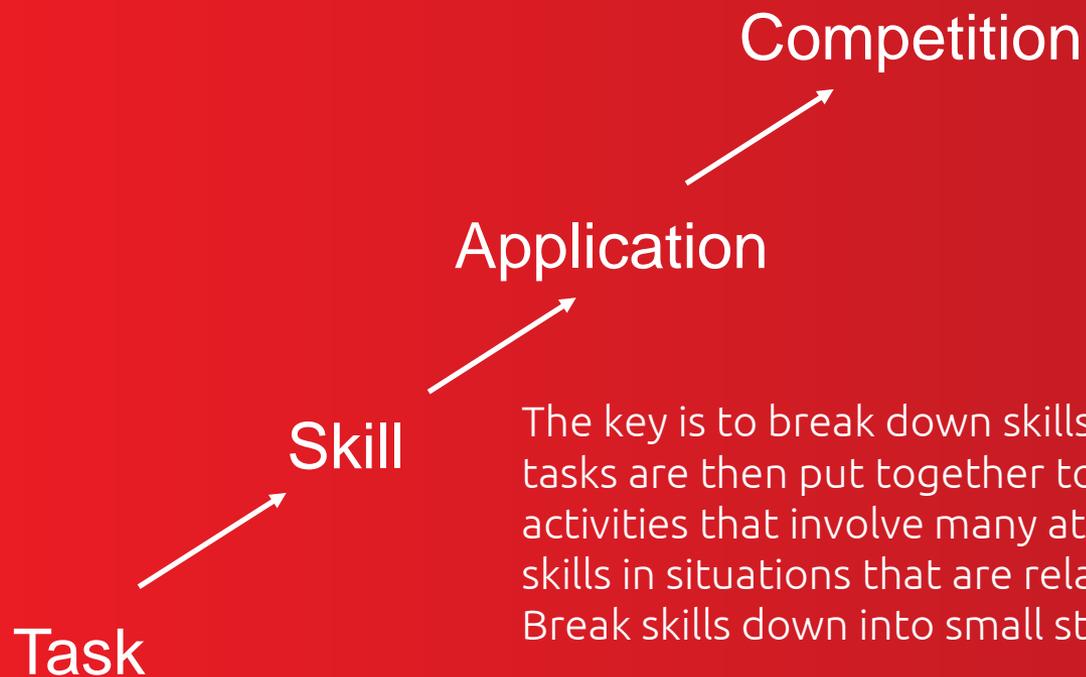
Unit 2 - Organizing a Training Session

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

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Unit 2 - Training Sequence



The key is to break down skills into small tasks or steps; tasks are then put together to form skills. Use drills and activities that involve many athletes at all times. Practice skills in situations that are related to the game or event. Break skills down into small steps.



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

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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



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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.

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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



Unit 2 - Level of Instruction or Assistance

Level of Instruction or Assistance	Description	Sport Example
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

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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.

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Unit 2 - Managing Athlete Behavior

Athlete Behavior Characteristics	Strategies to Improve Learning
Swimmer has a short attention span	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dwell on a stroke or activity for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task2. Provide different opportunities for repetition and review, which is the key to gaining new skill.3. Work one-on-one to gain full attention.
Basketball athlete yells if he/she misses a shot	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Emphasize the other aspects of the game besides shooting2. Work on shooting drills without a hoop3. Begin to shoot at a hoop but in a non-game setting with a one-on-one coach
Bowler doesn't wait their turn	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have a coach at the lane help with the order of bowlers, explain whose turn it is2. Have the bowler wait with a coach behind the bowling area until their turn is up3. Emphasize the order and that the bowler will always follow the same individual



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.

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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!)



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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.



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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.

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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

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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

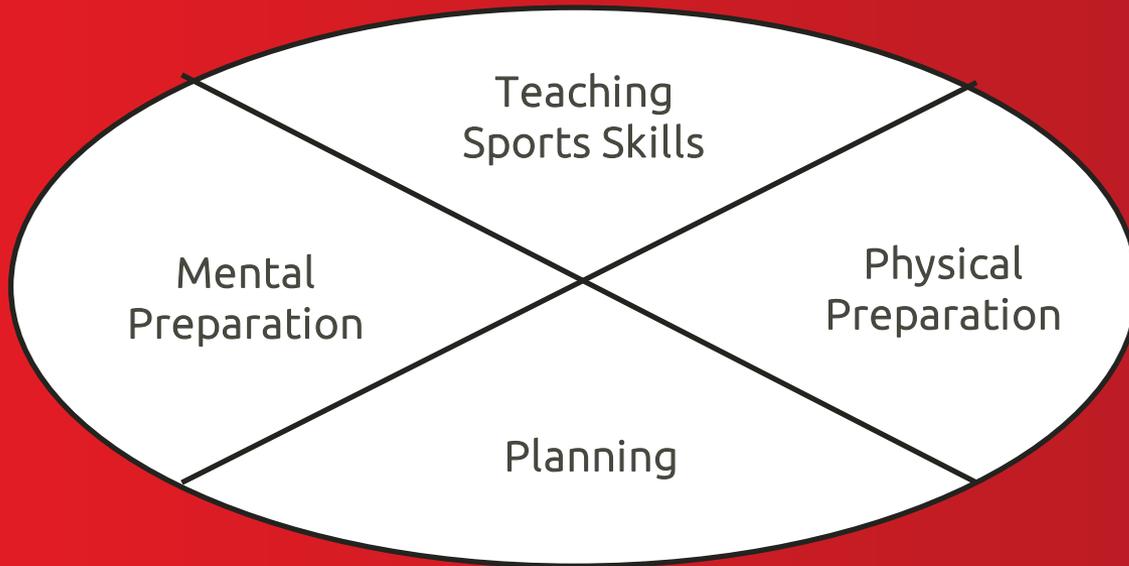
- Improves social and communication skills, opportunities to talk about Special Olympics at civic functions and assistance in joining non-Special Olympics sports opportunities

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Unit 4 – Area of Focus

Athlete Safety



Coaching Philosophy

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Unit 4 – Preparation

Assessment



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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!

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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.

- 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

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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

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Level 2 Poly Hockey

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:

7-16 athletes

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](#).

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Poly Hockey Equipment

Poly Hockey Sticks

- Sticks** - blade and shaft must be plastic and must not be modified in any way. This includes adding a dowel, sand or any other material to strengthen the handle. Blades may not be taped except for center position. Center position can have taped stick and blade.
 - Goalkeeper Sticks** - may have a wood shaft but blade must be plastic.
 - Center Sticks** - a center's stick must be striped with contrasting tape to indicate the center. No other player's stick may have this tape.
 - Curving sticks** - athletes may curve the blade of their sticks, but the amount of curvature cannot exceed the width of a dime.
- Puck - hard plastic/vinyl

Numbers on Jersey - numbers are required on all jerseys with numbers on the back.

Helmets and Pads - all athletes must wear hockey helmets. Optional equipment includes shin guards, elbow pads, mouth guards, knee pads and athletic supporter. All players must have a number on their jersey.

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Poly Hockey Equipment

Goals - Poly Hockey goals shall not be larger than 1.5 meters (5ft.) by 1.2 meters (4ft.).

Goalkeeper Equipment - Must wear a face mask with helmet and a throat protector at all times.

•**Optional Equipment** - catching glove, shin pads, blocking pad, mouth guard and protective cup.

•**Excessive Pads** - excessive shin pads and blocking pads are not allowed. No modifications to enhance the size of the blocking surface. Traditional goalie attire is required.

Illegal Equipment - subject to examination at any time. Illegal equipment will be held by the competition committee until the end of competition.

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Poly Hockey Roster

- Team Size:** minimum roster – 7, maximum roster – 16.
- A team needs to start the game with the minimum number of required positions filled to avoid a forfeit. If an injury occurs during a game, they can drop to one short and continue that game.

Six positions on the floor:

Center-one center: the only player allowed to move the full length of the court. Active on both offense and defense. Must take all face offs

Two Offensive Players –must have at least one foot in the offensive zone at all times to be considered on side. Offensive players may have one foot in the defensive zone and/or may reach across the center line with the stick.

Two Defensive Players -must have at least one foot in the defensive zone at all times to be considered onside. Defensive players may have one foot in the offensive zone and/or may reach across the center line with the stick.

Goalkeeper -one goal keeper who is not restricted to the goal crease, but only has the privileges of a goal keeper when they have at least one foot in the crease.



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Poly Hockey Gameplay Rules

Time and Periods - three, nine-minute periods. The first two periods will be running time and the third period will be stop time. One-minute break in between each period. Teams will have a 5-minute time buffer to start game if they are short players.

Clock Stoppage - anytime the official stops the play (timeout, injury, goal scored, penalty or infraction). The puck will stay in the zone it was in when the three and six minute stoppage occurs.

Timeouts- two one-minute time outs per game and teams may only call one timeout per period. Only one timeout per overtime (no carryover).

Scoring – Each goal is worth one point

Scoring on a Deflection - The puck can be deflected off a player or piece of equipment accidentally into the goal and be considered a goal. The puck cannot be kicked or thrown into the goal by an offensive player.

Goal Crease Goal - a goal cannot be scored on an offensive foul or with an offensive player or his/her stick in the goal crease. If a defensive player is in the goal crease when a goal is scored, the goal will count.

Additional Scoring Rules - a goal will be scored if the puck is put into the goal by a defensive player, the puck needs to be in the goal before the signal sounds to end the period, or a goal can be scored from a face-off in any locations.

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Poly Hockey Gameplay Rules

Overtime - play shall resume with a three-minute stop time overtime period. If the game remains tied as the end of the first overtime, the game shall be decided by a shootout. The shootout will consist of three rounds. If tied after three rounds, it will go into a sudden death round. A team must go through the entire roster before an athlete can shoot in another round. The shooter should keep forward momentum during his/her turn (referee's discretion). Spinning is not allowed.

Switching Ends/Line Changes – teams will have one minute in between each period to make line changes. Teams will not switch ends between periods unless both teams agree.

Playing Time - all players on a team's roster are required to play during the course of the game

Substitutions – only allowed at the three- and six-minute mark of each period or in case of an injury.

Pulling Goalie - if a team pulls their goalie, they will be allowed an additional center. The additional center has all the rights of the original center and can go anywhere on the court but only in the last two minutes of the game at the stoppage of play.

Player Changing Between Offense/Defense -a change of position between defensive and offensive players can be made when the puck is dead and after notifying the referee.

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Poly Hockey Gameplay Rules

Puck Movement - the puck may be advanced by either a player's stick or a player's foot. However, no goal can be scored by a player's foot.

Tiebreak within a division – if there is a three-way tie it is broken by total goals allowed to determine the highest place. It is then followed by who won the head to head matchup between the second and third team.

Forfeits – are marked as a 0-10 loss. Teams that forfeit 50% or more of their games in a tournament will receive a participation ribbon. In the event of a tie within a division, if a team has forfeited one game, they will automatically take last place within the tiebreak.

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Faceoff & Starting Play

Face-offs - face-offs start at the center circle and at the sound of the referee's whistle. Puck is placed in the center and not dropped.

Face-off Player Placement – when there is a face-off at center court, forwards will lineup on the offensive side of the center line. All players not involved in the face-off should be approximately 3 meters from the face-off circle during the face-off.

Goal Keepers Trap – when a goalkeeper traps or freezes the puck, play will resume with a face-off at the nearest face-off circle.

Defensive Infraction - the face-off will take place next to the nearest circle.

Offensive Infraction - the face-off will be held at the opposite end of the court in the nearest circle.

Puck out of Play - play does not stop when a puck leaves the court. The referee will simply drop a puck in play at the spot closest to where the puck left the playing area. The new puck is live as soon as it hits the floor.

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Goal Keeping

Goal Keepers - may handle the puck with their hands or other parts of their body. Goal keepers may trap the puck with their feet, stick or hands. Play will then resume with a face-off at the nearest face-off circle.

Positioning & Equipment – the goalkeeper must start in a standing position and may not use excessive equipment. Must make an attempt to follow the puck. May not deliberately stop and cover, lay down across the net.

Goalkeeper Substitution – there must be a goalkeeper at all times with the exception of the last two minutes of regulation time or of an overtime period. During the last two minutes of the game, the goalkeeper may be removed during a normal stoppage of play and replaced by a substitute. The goalkeeper may return to the game, replacing the substitute who was originally substituted for them.

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Goal Keeping

Goal Crease - offensive players are not allowed in the goal crease at anytime. It is an infraction when an offensive player and/or their stick goes i to the goal crease at anytime. This rule does not apply to the goalkeeper and defensive players.

Wheelchair Goalkeepers - athletes using a wheelchair are allowed to play goalie. However, in order to create a fair and equal competition environment, goalies using wheelchairs will be required to position themselves facing forward from the goal (or toward the location) at the start of each face-off. As non-wheelchair goalies are required to start from a standing position and are not allowed to lie across the front of the goal, goalies using a wheelchair may not remain positioned sideways across the goalmouth. Wheelchair goalies are allowed to tape their sticks to their chairs.

Clearing the Puck - when clearing the puck with their hands the goalkeeper must toss the puck in an underhand manner behind the line that extends from the goal pipe at a 45 degree like angle to the side face-off circles. If the goalkeeper is clearing the puck with their stick, they can clear the puck in any direction. The goalkeeper can freeze the puck to force a face-off.

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Infractions

Infractions - result in referee stopping play and it will resume with a face-off at the nearest circle.

Delayed Infraction - on certain infractions, a delayed infraction may be called. The infraction that resulted in the delayed infraction will not be called until the team on defense at the time of the infraction takes possession of the puck, advances the puck or a goal is scored against the defending team.

Infractions occur in the following instances:

- When a player deliberately holds, lies on, or steps on the puck.
- When a goalkeeper uses an overhand throw, throws the puck to the center side of the dotted line coming out 45 degrees from the goal-posts of his goal (delayed infraction).
- When a forward or defensive player crosses the center court line (delayed infraction).
- When a player other than the goalkeeper deliberately leaves their feet to block a pass or shot (delayed infraction).
- When an offensive player and/or their stick goes into the goal crease at any time.
- When high sticking takes place. This infraction occurs when a player raises their stick above their waist.

Five Infractions - a player will receive a two-minute penalty after accumulating five infractions. The penalty will start at the beginning of the next play

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Penalties

Penalties - result in a one-and-a-half-minute expulsion of the offending player or a player to be determined by the coach in the case of a bench penalty. The offending team will play a person short for the duration of the penalty unless the opposing team scores a goal. Penalty starts at the beginning of the next play.

Penalty time does not begin until the start of the next play.

Penalties occur in the following instances:

- When a player charges an opponent from behind, trips, elbows or intentionally pushes.
- When a player crosschecks an opponent.
- When any deliberate roughness takes place.
- When a player accumulates five infractions.
- When a bench penalty takes place.
- When unsportsmanlike conduct takes place.

If a center receives a penalty, the team loses that position for the duration of the penalty. During this time, another player will take the face-offs but doesn't have the ability to go the length of the court.

Three Penalties - a player will be ejected from the game

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Ejections

Ejections – a player or coach who commits an act which results in the ejection penalty must leave the playing area for the remainder of the game and will not be allowed to return to the following game (at a minimum). Player or coach will be eligible to return the next day at the event management’s discretion.

Ejections occur in the following instances:

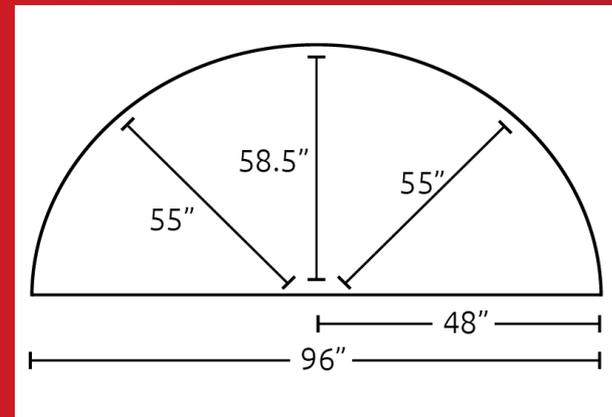
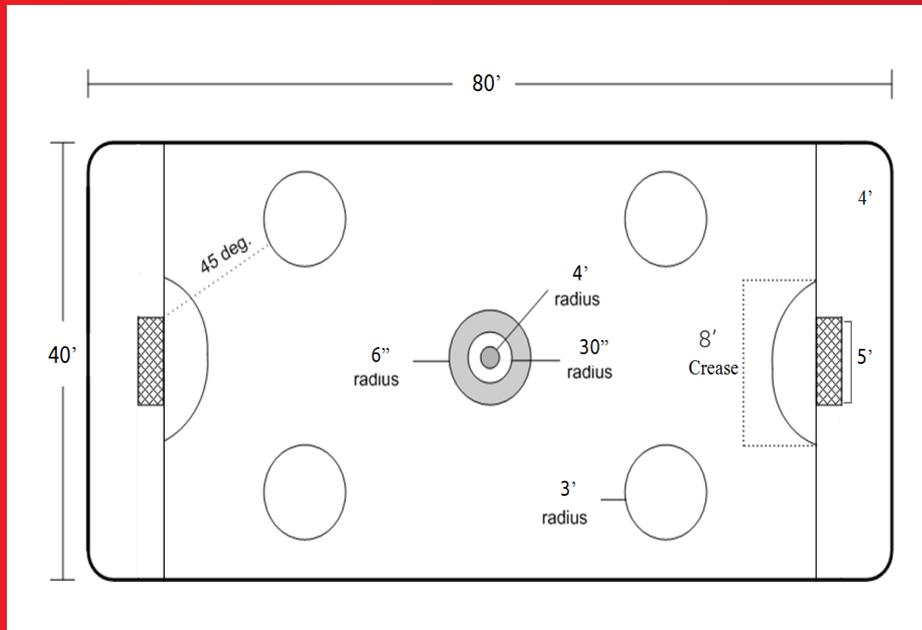
- Commits three penalties or ten infractions.
- When a player deliberately does anything that could cause injury or harm.
- When a coaches conduct becomes detrimental to the players and/or game. If, after the ejection, the coach’s misconduct continues, the game will be forfeited.
- When a player or coach intentionally throws or swings a stick.
- When a player engages in a fight or throws a punch.

Penalty Time – when a player/coach is ejected from a game, a teammate shall serve the two-minute penalty. An alternate may substitute for the ejected player after the two-minute penalty has been served.

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Poly Hockey Court Dimensions



Crease dimensions

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Poly Hockey Divisioning

Divisioning is based on age, team information from coaches (past tournament results, area competition and scrimmages). Each team is required to submit a team information page for online registration.

Assessment Score - Skill assessment scores are based on a coach rankings in stick handling, passing, goaltending, game awareness and shooting. Please click [here](#) for a blank copy of the assessment scoresheet.

Team Information - Information is provided based on any recent scrimmages, changes in roster from previous years or whether or not a team is stronger or weaker than previous years. Please click [here](#) for a blank copy of the team information page

State Poly Hockey Divisioning Committee

State Poly Hockey - divisioning is based on assessment scores and the results from Area and previous State competitions. When divisioning for State much more emphasis is put on tournament results and common opponents, coach notes, previous game results, and competitions.

Committee - divisioning is done by SOMN staff, coach feedback, and a divisioning committee consisting of coaches from all Areas. The committee meets for one hour either in person or via conference call two weeks before the competition. If you or someone from your delegation is interested in being a part of the State poly hockey divisioning committee, please contact coacheducation@somn.org

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Poly Hockey Registration

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 your Program Manager.

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

1. Assessment score for each athlete (see above)
 2. Coaches on each team
 3. Athletes and coaches must have appropriate paperwork submitted in order to register
- If an athlete is attending the State tournament, they must attend an Area tournament first.*



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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.

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Competitions

2022 Regional Competition Details

Region	Date	Location	City	Register By	Contact
Metro	Jan. 29	Breck School	Golden Valley	Jan. 10	sports@somn.org

Divisioning

- Coaches complete individual assessment scores for each athlete and are submitted through the online registration page. Assessment tool is used to determine the qualifying score for each athlete when submitting online.
- Coaches should complete the [Team Information page](#) for each poly hockey team.

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Poly Hockey Equipment List

Equipment List - Poly Hockey

Hockey sticks

Blade and shaft must be plastic, NOT taped. Amount of curvature cannot exceed the width of a dime.

Goalkeeper stick

May have wooden shaft, but blade must be plastic.

Center's stick

Shaft must be striped with contrasting tape. Blade can also be striped.

Pucks

Hard plastic/vinyl

Helmets

All athletes must wear hockey helmets. Face mask encouraged.

Pads

OPTIONAL: Shin guards, elbow pads, mouth guards, knee pads, protective cups, etc.

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Poly Hockey Equipment List

Goals

No larger than 1.5m (5ft) by 1.2m (4ft)

Goalkeeper equipment

OPTIONAL: Catching glove, shin pads, blocking pad, mouth guard,
protective cup

Plastic cones

For training/drill purposes

Rink barriers

Hockey tape

Pinnies

Clipboards

Whistle

Flip scoreboard

Tape measure

Stopwatch

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Practice, Skill Development & Resources

Special Olympics Minnesota wants to make sure that you have confidence in your knowledge of poly hockey rules, skills and practice ideas. Listed below are Special Olympics Minnesota poly hockey resources that can help with the training and skill development for athletes. Please note, Special Olympics, Inc. does not offer poly hockey but instead offers floor hockey, which is a variation of hockey that is more closely related to ringette. Special Olympics, Inc. floor hockey resources are listed below because they still offer valuable training ideas.

Special Olympics Poly Hockey Resources

[Special Olympics Minnesota Poly Hockey Page](#)

[SOI Floor Hockey Coaching Guide](#)

[Planning a Floor Hockey Training Season](#)

[Teaching Floor Hockey Skills](#)

[Floor Hockey Quick Start Guide](#)



For additional resources and video tutorials on Special Olympics, Inc floor hockey please visit <http://www.specialolympics.org/floor-hockey.aspx>

For any questions regarding Special Olympics Minnesota poly hockey please contact coacheducation@somn.org

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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.

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Level 2 Poly Hockey Quiz

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

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

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