

Level 2 Track and Field

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

The first portion of this training is Coaching Special Olympics Athletes.

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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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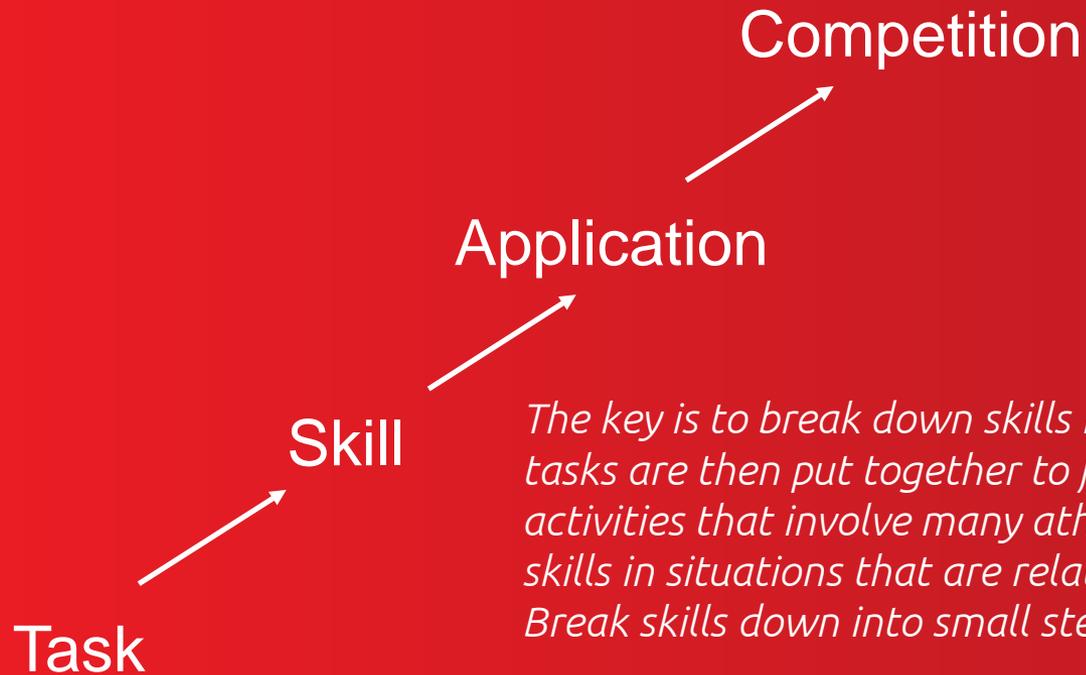
Unit 2 - Organizing a Training Session

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.

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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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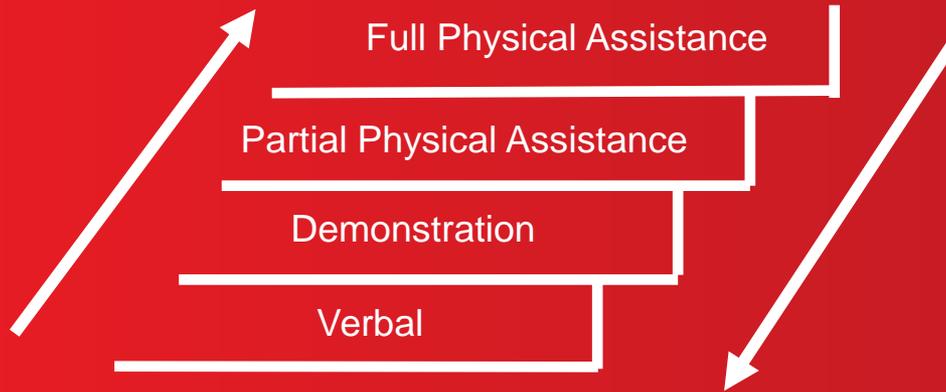
Unit 2 - Communication

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

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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

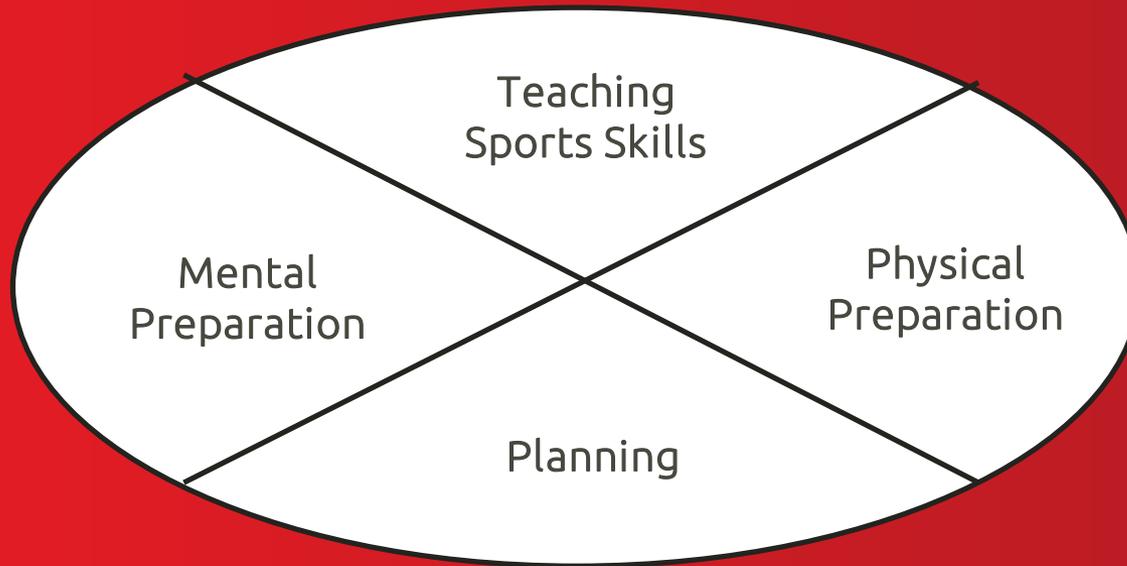
- Improves social and communication skills, opportunities to talk about Special Olympics at civic functions and assistance in joining non-Special Olympics sports opportunities

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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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Level 2 Track & Field

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Track Events and Rules

- Races 400 meters or below, the commands of the starter shall be —“on your marks,” —“set,” and, when all competitors are set, the gun shall be fired.
- In races 800 meters or longer, the commands shall be —“on your marks” and, when all competitors are steady, the gun shall be fired. A competitor shall not touch the ground with their hand(s).
- 800 meters distance: Athletes will stay in the lanes through the first turn and break toward lane one at the break-line marked after the first turn.
- 1500 meters and greater distances: A waterfall start shall be used. Athletes may cut in as soon as they have space to not interfere with another athlete.
- If a competitor is pushed or forced by another person to run or walk outside their lane, and if no material advantage is gained, the competitor should not be disqualified.
- During walking events, athletes must have one foot in touch with the ground at all times.
- **Crossing into a Different Lane** - If a competitor is pushed or forced by another person to run outside their lane, and if no material advantage is gained, the competitor should not be disqualified.
- **False Starts** - Athletes are allowed one false start. On the second false start they are disqualified and receive a participation award.
- **Walking Events** - Athletes must have one foot in touch with the ground at all times.
- **Maximum Time** – For races of 100m or under, there is a max time limit of 5-minutes.

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Track Events and Rules

Physically Assisted Events

- Under the Physical Assisted category, athletes can have a person on the track to guide them however the athlete must propel themselves under their own power (delegations must provide registered coach for on track guide).
- Athletes may also provide their own assisted walking devices. Assisted devices may consist of canes, crutches or walker.
- Athlete starts behind the start line with the wheels of walking device behind the start line
- Athlete is timed from the smoke of the starter's gun to when their torso reaches the perpendicular plane of the nearest edge of the finish line.

Events Offered: 50m, 25m, 10m

Device Assisted Events

- Athletes may also provide their own assisted devices. Assisted devices may consist of canes, crutches or walker.
- Athlete starts behind the start line with a walking aid.
- Athlete walks using a walking aid.
- Athlete may not receive physical assistance from coaches, officials, etc.
- Athlete is timed from the smoke of the starter's gun to when their torso reaches the perpendicular plane of the nearer edge of the finish line.

Events Offered: 50m, 25m, 10m

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Wheelchair Events and Rules

Non-motorized Wheelchair Events

- Athletes shall start with all wheels behind the start line.
- Athlete is timed from the smoke of the starter's gun to when all front wheels (two or one) of the wheelchair reach the perpendicular plane of the nearer edge of the finish line.
- Athletes shall not be pushed, pulled or otherwise assisted during these events.
- Each competitor must keep in their lane from start to finish and may not interfere, obstruct or impede the progress of another competitor. Infractions, at the discretion of the judges, may result in disqualification.

Events Offered: 100m, 50m, 25m, 10m

Non- motorized Wheelchair Slalom

- Beginning at the start line, place one cone in each lane at 5-meter intervals. Cones should be placed in the middle of the lanes.
- Athlete maneuvers their chair through the course, going to the right of the first obstacle and across the finish line without impeding another athlete on the course. Knocking down a marker constitutes a violation, and a three-second penalty will be assessed.

Events Offered 50m, 30m

Motorized Wheelchair Races

- The first two wheels on each competitor's wheelchair will be regarded as the starting and finishing points of all races.
- If a competitor varies from a sequence of obstacles, they must, without notice from any official, resume progress at the point prior to the incorrectly passed obstacle before entering the next obstacle and complete the course in its entirety, or be disqualified.
- In essence, failure to complete the course as designed will result in disqualification.
- A competitor will be disqualified if that individual's coach (or assistants) enters the course boundaries during the running of the obstacle course. Coaches may instruct from outside the marked boundaries of the course.
- Judges and officials will not give directional cues.
- Athlete is timed from the smoke of the starter's gun to when the front wheels of the wheelchair reach the perpendicular plane of the nearer edge of the finish line.

Events Offered: 100m, 50m, 25m

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Motorized Wheelchair Slalom

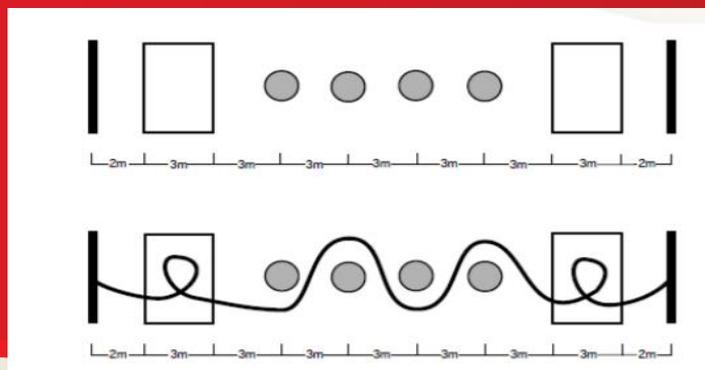
- Each athlete will use two lanes as their lane, sufficiently wide enough to allow for wheelchairs.
- Diagram — 30 and 50 Meter Motorized Wheelchair Slalom can be found on page 13 of the SOI rule book.
- Athlete maneuvers their chair through the course, going to the right of the first obstacle and across the finish line without impeding another athlete on the course. Knocking down a cone constitutes a violation, and a three-second penalty will be assessed.

Events Offered: 50m, 30m

Motorized Wheelchair Obstacle Course

- Athlete starts facing the course.
- The athlete completes a 360 degree circle with in the three meter box which will be marked by cones two meters up from the starting line. Upon completion, the athlete weaves in and out of four cones set 3 meters apart, then completes a second 360 degree circle between the 3 meter box marked with cones starting 5 meters from the finish line.
- The box (3 meters x 3 meters) is used only as an indicator for the athlete to complete the 360-degree circle. No points and/or time shall be deducted for touching or going over the lines. The box can be outlined with chalk and cones.
- Knocking down a marker constitutes a violation, and a three-second penalty will be assessed. Competitors who do not make an obvious attempt to go between each pair of markers are subject to disqualification at the discretion of the referee.
- Diagram for this event can be found on page 14 of the SOI rule book.

Events Offered: 25m



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Jumping Events and Rules

In the running long jump and standing long jump each athlete shall be allowed three non-consecutive attempts. All three attempts shall be measured and recorded for breaking ties. The longest measurement of the three attempts shall be used for scoring. All long jump events will be measured from takeoff.

Running Long Jump

- In the long jump, an athlete must be able to jump at least 1m.
- Distance will be measured from the closest impression on the landing area made by any part of the body or limbs to the take-off line for all jumps.
- If an athlete jumps less than 1M at the regional meet, they cannot advance to state in the running long jump.
- All jump attempts will be measured from takeoff. Takeoff for the running long jump will be a least 0.5M from pit.

Standing Long Jump

- A competitor shall use both feet on the take-off. They may rock backward and forward lifting their heels and toes alternately, but they may not lift either foot completely off the ground.
- Distance will be measured from the closest impression on the landing area made by any part of the body or limbs to the take-off line for all jumps.
- All jump attempts will be measured from takeoff. Takeoff for the standing long jump will be at the edge of the pit.

High Jump

- The competitor shall take off from one foot.
- The minimum opening height for all high jump competitions shall be 1.00 meter.
- Competitors shall not dive forward over the bar or take off from a two-footed stance.



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Throwing Events and Rules

In the throwing events (shot put, softball throw and tennis ball throw) each athlete shall be allowed three non-consecutive attempts. All three attempts shall be measured and recorded for breaking ties. The longest measurement of the three attempts shall be used for scoring.

Shot Put

- The shot may be steel, brass, or a synthetic-covered implement. Women's shot is 3kg (6.6lbs). Men's shot is 4kg (8.8lbs)
- It is acceptable to include wheelchair athletes in the regular divisions of the shot put, but the weight of shot must be the same for all competitors.
- A legal put shall be made from within the circle. In the course of an attempt, the athlete, or wheelchair, may not touch the top edge of the stop-board, the top of the iron ring or any surface outside of the circle. It is legal to touch the inside of the stop-board or the iron band.
- The put shall be declared foul and shall not be measured if, after entering the circle and starting the put, the competitor commits any of the following:
 - Uses any method contrary to the definition of legal
 - Causes the shot to fall on or outside the lines marking the landing vector.

Softball Throw and Tennis Ball Throw Softball Throw: 30 centimeter (11 3/4 inches) in circumference softball shall be used.

- Tennis Ball Throw: a tennis ball shall be used.
- Competitors may use any type of throw.
- These throwing events are for athletes who throw the ball 15M or less. If an athlete throws more than 15M, they will be awarded participation and cannot advance to state in that event.
- Distance will be measured from the start line to where the ball first contacts the ground, not the final location of the ball

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Pentathlon

Pentathlon events:

100 meter run
Running long jump
Shot put
High jump
400 meter run

Points are awarded for each event and added together for a final pentathlon score. If achieved time or distance is not given in the pentathlon score table, the score for the nearest lesser performance should be read.

The pentathlon scoring table is found in the SOI Athletics Rulebook on page 16-33, click [here](#) to access the scoring table.



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Assistance Needed

- Guide Runner- When an athlete is visually impaired and needs a guide runner. Must be provided by delegation.
- Whistle Start- When an athlete in a race has this assistance, the race will start by whistle instead of the starting gun; should only be used when athletes have severe reactions to the starting gun.
- Visual Start- When an athlete in a race has this assistance, the race will start by starting gun, but an official/assistant will signal near the athlete to give them a visual cue to start.
- Touch Start- When an athlete in a race has this assistance, the race will start by starting gun, but an official/assistant will touch the athlete to give them a cue to start.
- Middle Lane- The athlete will be on the middle lanes; i.e. on an 8 lane track, the athlete would be placed on lanes 2-7.
- Outside Lane- The athlete will be on an outside lane; i.e. on an 8 lane track, the athlete would be placed on lane 1 or 8.
- Staging- The athlete is allowed to have an assistant through the staging area.
- Rope- The athlete uses a rope/guide provided by the delegations. Offered in races 100M and shorter.
- 1 on 1- The athlete is allowed to have an assistant through the staging area and up to the starting line. At this point, the assistant must go to the finish line and wait for the athlete to finish the race. AT NO TIME IS AN ASSISTANT ALLOWED ON THE TRACK, EXCEPT IN A PHYSICAL ASSISTED EVENT.

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General Rules for Blind and Deaf Athletes

- A rope or sighted guide runner may be provided to assist athletes who are visually impaired.
- Rope or sighted guide runner must be provided by the delegation.
- Ropes may only be used for races up to 100m. Contact sports@somn.org for questions.
- A sighted guide runner may not be ahead of the athlete in any manner. At no time may the guide runner pull the athlete or propel the athlete forward by pushing.
- A tap start will be used for an athlete who is both deaf and blind.
- Rope and sight guides must be provided by delegations

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General Rules for Unified Sports Relays

- Each Unified Sports relay team shall consist of two athletes and two partners.
- Runners on a relay team may be assigned to run in any order.
- Teams must have competed as a relay team at a regional competition.
- Each relay is only allowed one substitution
- Athlete substitutions are allowed at the regional and state level and will run under the rules: the newly created team may run any time slower than their qualifying score, but only 5% faster. If a team making a substitution runs more than 5% faster than their qualifying score, they will receive a participation ribbon
- If a Unified relay has a Unified Partner with an excused absence at the regional level, another Unified Partner may sub in the day of the meet but that Unified Partner must be registered for competition. The relay team will receive a participation award. The regional qualifying score will be used for state divisioning and the original relay team registered for regional will run at state. This would count as the relay's one substitution.
- Unified Partner substitutions are not allowed at state.

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Track and Field Divisioning & Registration

Track and Field Divisioning (3-8 athletes per division)

- **Ability** - Practice qualifying score for each event
- **Age** - (approx. 8-15, 16-21, 22-29, and 30 and older)
- **Divisions** - The scores within a division are 15 percent between highest and lowest scores.

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.

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

1. Practice qualifying score for each event that an athlete/partner competes in
2. Coaches on each team
3. Athletes/partners must have appropriate paperwork submitted in order to register

If an athlete is attending the State competition they must attend Regional first.

State Divisioning - divisions are based on an Athlete's Regional results

Combining Lanes - Be aware that in an attempt to minimize the length of the competition, we may put multiple divisions on the track for certain events. Please advise coaches, parents, and spectators of this so there isn't confusion on why an athlete is so much faster or slower than another during a single race, or why an athlete who physically placed fourth in a race may receive a gold medal or first place ribbon.



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Competition Information

Region	Date	Location	City	Register By	Contact
Southeast	May 8	Rochester John Marshall High School	Rochester	April 17	sports@somn.org
West	May 11	Moorhead High School	Moorhead	April 20	sports@somn.org
Metro	May 14	Eastview High School	Apple Valley	April 24	sports@somn.org
Metro	May 21	Roosevelt High School	Minneapolis	May 1	sports@somn.org
Southwest	May 21	Redwood Falls High School	Redwood Falls	May 1	sports@somn.org
North	June 4	Grand Rapids High School	Grant Rapids	May 15	sports@somn.org

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State Competition Date

Date	Location	City	Quota	Register
June 24-26	Stillwater High School	Stillwater	May 15	June 5

Summer Games Competition Details

- Events: Athletes may compete in three individual events and one relay event, or the pentathlon and one relay. Regional Competitions may differ, please contact sports@somn.org.
- Races: Athletes must abide by the rules of the event in which they are entered, walk, run, or wheelchair. An athlete may be disqualified if they run in a walk event, pass the baton to the wrong team in a relay or run outside of their lane and impede the progress of another runner.
- Throws: the softball and tennis ball throw are developmental events designed to provide meaningful competition for athletes with lower abilities. Athletes with qualifying scores of 15m and above for the tennis or softball ball throw may not compete in this event. Athletes may enter only one of the following events: shot put, softball throw or tennis ball throw.
- Long Jump: Athletes in the running long jump must meet the 1m minimum jump requirement. Athletes may enter only one of the following events: running long jump or standing long jump.
- High Jump: Athletes must jump off one foot. Opening height at state competition is 1m.

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State Competition Information

- **Staging** - Athletes should be to staging at least 15 minutes prior to their event. From this point on the competition is a closed competition meaning coaches, parents and spectators are not allowed in staging or on the track
- **Assistants** - If an athlete needs an assistant please register them for the appropriate assistance category in advance. The assistant is allowed in staging and on the track but may not run in the lane or alongside an athlete.
- **Events** - Athletes may compete in three individual events and one relay event, or the pentathlon and one relay.
- **Races** - Athletes must abide by the rules of the event in which they are entered. Walk, run, or wheelchair. An athlete may be disqualified if they run in a walk event, pass the baton to the wrong team in a relay, or run outside of their lane and impede the progress of another runner.
- **Relay Substitutions** - In an attempt to create an equitable system to allow for relay substitutions but maintain the intent of the divisioning process, we will allow a relay team to make ONE substitution for an Athlete. However we do not allow a Unified Partner to sub on a relay for another Athlete or Unified Partner. The newly created team may run any time slower than their qualifying score, but only 5% faster. If a team making a substitution runs more than 5% faster than their qualifying score, they will receive a participation ribbon.
- **Maximum Time** – For races of 100m or under, there is a max time limit of 5-minutes.

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- **Throws** - the softball and tennis ball throw are developmental events designed to provide meaningful competition for athletes with lower abilities. Athletes with qualifying scores of 15M and above for the tennis ball throw may not compete in this event. Athletes with qualifying scores of 15M and above for the softball throw may not compete in this event. Athletes may enter only one of the following events: shot put, softball throw or tennis ball. Athletes that throw over 15M in the softball throw cannot move up to the shot put in the same year (example: from Regional to State).
- **Long Jump** - Athletes in the running long jump must meet the 1M minimum jump requirement. Athletes that don't meet the minimum 1M running long jump distance at Regional are allowed to substitute a different event at State provided they have a qualifying score. Athletes may enter only one of the following events: running long jump or standing long jump.
- **High Jump** - Athletes must jump off one foot. Opening height at state competition is one meter.

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Events Offered At State

- **Field events offered at State**
- Shot Put or Throws (Tennis ball or Softball)
- Long Jump – Running or Standing
- High Jump
- **Pentathlon** (High Jump, Running Long Jump, 400 Meter Dash, & 100 Meter Dash)
- 10M Wheelchair or Assisted Walk (device or physical)
- 25M Events - Walk, Dash, Asst Walk (device or physical)
- 25M Wheelchair Obstacle and Race (motorized or manual)
- 25M Assisted Dash (physical)
- 30M Wheelchair Slalom (motorized or manual)
- 50M Walk, Dash, Asst. Walk (device or physical)
- 50M Wheelchair Slalom and Race (motorized or manual)
- 50M Assisted Dash (physical)
- 100M Walk or Run
- 100M Wheelchair Race (motorized or manual)
- 200M Walk or Run
- 400M Walk or Run
- 800M Walk or Run
- 1500M Walk or Run
- 4x100M Unified Relay
- 4x100M Relay

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Practice, Skill Development & Resources

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

[Special Olympics Minnesota Track and Field Handbook and Rules](#)



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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

Special Olympics
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SOMN Health Programs

SOMN offers health programs to integrate into your sports season to enhance your athletes 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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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 Track and Field Quiz

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

To take the Level 2 Track and Field quiz please [click here](#).

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