

# **SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Special Olympics is founded on the belief that people with intellectual disabilities can, with proper instruction and encouragement, learn, enjoy and benefit from participation in individual and team sports, adapted as necessary to meet the needs of those with special mental and physical limitations.

Special Olympics believes that consistent training is essential to the development of sport skills, and that competition among those of equal abilities is the most appropriate means of testing these skills, measuring progress and providing incentives for personal growth.

Special Olympics believes that through sports training and competition, people with intellectual disabilities benefit physically, mentally, socially and spiritually; families are strengthened; and the community at large, both through participation and observation, is united in understanding people with intellectual disabilities in an environment of equality, respect and acceptance.

Special Olympics believes that every person with intellectual disabilities who is at least 8 years old should have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from sports training and competition.

# **2015 – 2016 STATE COMPETITION SCHEDULE**

Competition opportunities are offered on a year-round basis in all of the sports offered by Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI). Competition divisions are based on age, gender and ability level. Athletes advance to higher levels of competition by qualifying first, second or third at the Regional, district and/or Sectional level.

## **2016 WINTER GAMES** – Wausau, WI

**January 23 - 24, 2016**

Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowboarding and Snowshoeing

## **2016 INDOOR SPORTS TOURNAMENT** – Oshkosh, WI

Planning is not complete for the State Indoor Sports Tournament. Information and forms will be distributed as soon as plans are confirmed.

## **2016 SUMMER GAMES** – Stevens Point, WI

**June 9 - 11, 2016**

Aquatics (Swimming), Athletics (Track & Field), Powerlifting and Football (Soccer)

## **2016 OUTDOOR SPORTS TOURNAMENT** – Waukesha, WI

**August 6, 2016**

Bocce, Golf, Unified Sports® Golf, Softball, Tennis

## **2016 STATE FLAG FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT** – Neenah, WI

**October 2, 2016**

Flag Football

# SPECIAL OLYMPICS WISCONSIN

## 2015-2016 COMPETITION GUIDE

### **KEY CHANGES AND IMPORTANT REMINDERS**

Please note that this is only a synopsis and **does not reflect all of the Competition Guide** changes for the 2015-2016 Program year. Coaches should review the rules annually in order to become familiar with any changes that have been made.

1. Indoor Sports Tournament. Planning is not completed for the 2016 State Indoor Tournament. Information and registration forms will be distributed as they become available.
2. Section A. The sports rules are now housed on our website at [www.specialolympicswisconsin.org](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org).
3. Coaches' certification requirement. The certification requirement for coaches will change beginning with the 2015 Fall Tournament season. Coaches will no longer be required to obtain a sports-specific certification, but will be required to complete the on-line general coaches' certification (available in the fall of 2015 at [www.specialolympicswisconsin.org](http://www.specialolympicswisconsin.org)). SOWI will continue to offer sports specific certifications as an educational resource, and existing certifications as of August will be grandfathered into the process until they expire (coaches who are currently certified will not need to complete the on-line general certification until their current sports specific certification expires). Details are provided in the Training section of the Agency Manager Handbook.
4. Training. All emails regarding certification status can now be sent to [training@specialolympicswisconsin.org](mailto:training@specialolympicswisconsin.org)
5. Flag Football. A mercy rule has been added. Please see page 109A for details
6. Flag Football. The rules regarding hand-offs have been changed. See page 111A for details
7. Flag Football. The rule requiring that all penalties be accepted has changed. See page 113A for details.
8. Basketball. Rules for Half Court 3 on 3 Unified Basketball have been added.
9. Basketball. Two free throws will be awarded beginning with the seventh team foul in each half.
10. Basketball Skills Level 2 12m Dribble. The description has been changed to: "When the last obstacle (the final cone) is passed, the player will dribble around the cone and back through the slalom (down and back). A point is received for every midpoint that the athlete crosses."
11. Basketball Skills Level 2 Perimeter Shooting. The description has been changed to: "A player stands anywhere along the free-throw line within the free throw circle."
12. Soccer. The rules governing overtime have been clarified.

**DISPOSE OF (RECYCLE OR THROW AWAY) ALL OLD FORMS AND OLD COMPETITION GUIDE INFORMATION.**

**PLEASE USE ONLY 2015 - 2016 SOWI COMPETITION GUIDE FORMS**

# INTRODUCTION

The Special Olympics Wisconsin Competition Guide has been designed to enable coaches, Agency managers and families to prepare their athletes and programs to take part in local, Regional and State competitions offered by Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI).

SOWI strongly recommends that each coach and Agency manager read this guide in advance of their athletes' training. In addition, all Agencies should obtain copies of the Special Olympics Rules books and any National Governing Body Rules books pertaining to each sport in which the program participates.

All coaches, assistant coaches and Agency managers should read the official sports rules for Special Olympics available at [SpecialOlympics.org](http://SpecialOlympics.org).

The purpose of this guide is to give each Agency the necessary information to best serve the athletes involved in each local program. Everything you will need to know about the Special Olympics Wisconsin State Program competitions will be found in this guide.

Please make copies of sections of this guide for all of your coaches and family members involved with the training of athletes. Guard your copy as it contains all registration forms and other valuable information to ensure your program's successful involvement in the SOWI program year.

After reading this guide and the rules book, please call your Region office if you have questions. Telephone numbers are listed in the back of this guide.

Thanks for your commitment, time and effort in making Special Olympics Wisconsin a quality sports program.

## **ATHLETE REGISTRATION**

In order for an athlete to be properly trained for competition, a minimum of eight training sessions for each sport prior to the Regional, district and/or sectional competition is required. SOWI recommends that for optimal results, an athlete should train for one hour at least three times per week for eight to 10 weeks prior to competition. Before beginning training, it is the Agency manager's responsibility to ensure that each athlete has the correctly completed and approved Special Olympics Release Form and Application for Participation in Special Olympics form on file with the Special Olympics Wisconsin Headquarters office postmarked by the medical deadline date for the sport in which the athlete is participating. Unified Sports® Partners must complete the Class A registration process by the medical deadline for the season in which they wish to participate.

If an athlete was previously registered with Special Olympics Wisconsin and their application form expires prior to the last day of the State competition in which the athlete is registered, a new Special Olympics Application Form for Participation in Special Olympics must be completed correctly, mailed to the Headquarters office, postmarked by the appropriate postmark date for that sport and approved. These medical deadline dates are provided annually.

**Please note that an athlete must be 8 years of age by the medical deadline date in order for SOWI to process the athlete's medical form, and for the athlete to compete in that season.**

It is the responsibility of the Agency manager to keep accurate records of medical expiration dates. Please give sufficient notice to family members, guardians, school personnel, etc. that an athlete's medical form needs to be renewed. **If the athlete has a yearly physical or a significant medical condition change, the medical form can be renewed at that time.**

Medical forms from another Special Olympics program or organization (i.e. camp medical, school medical, etc.) are not transferable or acceptable.

Athletes with Down syndrome may be required to complete a Special Examination Form. There is now increasing evidence from medical research that up to 15% of individuals with Down syndrome have a condition known as atlanto-axial instability, which is a misalignment of cervical vertebrae C – 1 and C – 2 in the neck. This condition exposes individuals with Down syndrome to the possibility of injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck muscles.

If an athlete with Down syndrome is participating in the following sports, they are required to have X-rays taken and the Special Examination Form completed and returned to the Headquarters office before the athlete starts training in: artistic gymnastics, pentathlon, butterfly stroke in swimming, diving start in swimming, high jump, soccer, alpine skiing, snowboarding, equestrian, squat lift, judo and any warm-up exercise that places undue stress on the head and neck muscles. Special Examination Forms are available from the Headquarters office.

**For more information regarding the SOWI medical policy, please see the registration section of the Agency Manager Handbook.**

# **ATHLETE REGISTRATION**

## **OFFICIAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS RELEASE FORM AND APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

The Official Special Olympics Release Form and Application for Participation in Special Olympics serve as an athlete's registration for Special Olympics and must be completed before an athlete participates in any Special Olympics training program. They provide for a photo release, necessary medical information, secondary insurance coverage by Special Olympics, Incorporated, and emergency medical treatment in the event a parent or guardian cannot be reached.

### **THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS WISCONSIN MEDICAL POLICY**

**If an athlete's Application For Participation in Special Olympics form expires prior to the last day of the State competition for which the athlete is registered, a new Application For Participation in Special Olympics form must be completed correctly, mailed to the Headquarters office, postmarked by the appropriate medical deadline date for that sport and approved.** The athlete's Release Form must also be on file by the medical deadline date. (Example: an athlete whose application expires on January 10, 2016 wishes to compete in alpine skiing. The last day of the State competition is January 25, 2016; therefore, a new application must be correctly completed and postmarked by the December 1<sup>st</sup> medical deadline date.) The medical deadline dates also apply to Unified Sports® partners. They must complete the Class A registration process by the medical deadline date for the season in which they wish to participate.

The APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS form must be completed every three years unless otherwise stated from the physician, or when an athlete has a significant medical condition change during the three-year period for their medical. The Application for Participation in Special Olympics form may be completed yearly if the parents/guardians wish to have the form completed when the athlete has an annual examination.

Athletes who are NEW to Special Olympics must submit the Official Special Olympics Release Form AND the Application for Participation in Special Olympics form postmarked by the appropriate medical deadline date.

Medical deadline dates are strictly enforced. **THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE MEDICAL FORM POLICY.** Completed medical forms **MAY NOT** be faxed to the Headquarters office. An athlete must be eight years old by the medical deadline date for whichever sport the athlete is participating.

The OFFICIAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS RELEASE FORM only needs to be completed once unless there is a change in guardianship for the athlete.

Official Special Olympics Release Forms and Application For Participation in Special Olympics forms are available from the Region or Headquarters office, the SOWI website and via e-mail. Please contact the Headquarters office to obtain forms via e-mail.

# REGISTERED ATHLETES REPORT

Throughout the year the Agency manager will receive a roster of all the athletes the Headquarters office has registered for their program. This will include the medical expiration date, comments and restricted sports. This information should be checked against the provided copy of the athlete's medical form to ensure accuracy.

**If an athlete's Application For Participation in Special Olympics form expires prior to the last day of the State competition for which the athlete is registered, a new Application For Participation in Special Olympics form must be completed correctly, mailed to the Headquarters office, postmarked by the appropriate medical deadline date for that sport and approved.** The athlete's Release Form must also be on file by the medical deadline date. (Example: an athlete whose application expires on January 10, 2016 wishes to compete in alpine skiing. The last day of the State competition is January 25, 2016; therefore, a new application must be correctly completed and postmarked by the December 1<sup>st</sup> medical deadline date.) The medical deadline dates also apply to Unified Sports® partner athletes. They must complete the Class A registration process by the medical deadline date for the season in which they wish to participate. **Athletes who are NEW to Special Olympics must submit both the Official Special Olympics Release Form AND the Application For Participation In Special Olympics form correctly completed and postmarked by the appropriate medical deadline date.**

## **2015 – 2016 STATE COMPETITION MEDICAL DEADLINE DATES**

<b>2015 FALL SPORTS SEASON</b> Bowling and Volleyball	<b>OCTOBER 1, 2015</b>
<b>2016 WINTER GAMES</b> January 23-24, 2016 Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowboarding, and Snowshoe Racing	<b>DECEMBER 1, 2015</b>
<b>2016 INDOOR SPORTS TOURNAMENT</b> TBD Basketball Skills, Team Basketball and Gymnastics	<b>FEBRUARY 1, 2016</b>
<b>2015 SUMMER GAMES</b> June 9-11, 2016 Aquatics, Athletics, Powerlifting and Football (Soccer)	<b>APRIL 1, 2016</b>
<b>2016 OUTDOOR SPORTS TOURNAMENT</b> August 6, 2016 Bocce, Golf, Unified Sports® Golf, Softball, and Tennis	<b>JUNE 1, 2016</b>

**NOTE:** *Coaches and chaperones are required to take copies of the athletes' medicals along with them on every Special Olympics-related trip, competition, event, sports practice, etc.*

### **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

THERE ARE **NO EXCEPTIONS** TO THE MEDICAL FORM POLICY!!  
COMPLETED MEDICAL FORMS **MAY NOT** BE FAXED TO THE HEADQUARTERS OFFICE.

## GENERAL COMPETITION POLICIES

Special Olympics Wisconsin, Inc. (SOWI) is the sole accrediting and sports governing body for Special Olympics in the State of Wisconsin. As the accrediting and sports governing body, SOWI has the right and responsibility to manage and enforce all rules of sport, establish policies and procedures governing sports competition, and manage the involvement of athletes and volunteers within the program. In addition, SOWI may suspend or impose other sanctions upon individual volunteers or Agencies that violate the organization's policies and/or procedures, and may develop and impose penalties for the violation of sports rules not specifically covered by the National Governing Body for each specific sport.

1. **DEADLINES** – All deadlines for medical forms (Official Special Olympics Release Form and Application for Participation in Special Olympics form, Class A Volunteer Forms, Intent to Play Forms and Competition Registration Forms must be met for athletes and teams to be eligible for competition. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS FOR MISSED DEADLINES.**
  - a. Medical Forms (Official Special Olympics Release Form and Application for Participation in Special Olympics form) and Class A Volunteer Forms are to be sent to the SOWI Headquarters office in Madison, WI.
  - b. Intent to Play Forms and all State and district competition registration forms are to be sent to your Regional office or host Regional office per instructions on each of these forms.
  - c. All medical restrictions must be lifted no later than the end of the business day one week following the event entry deadline.
2. **REGISTRATION FORMS** – All State, Regional, district or sectional competition registration forms are to be mailed or turned in according to dates identified on each form. (See calendar section for deadlines.)
3. **QUALIFYING SCORES** submitted for Regional, district, sectional or State competition must be the **best** (not an average) performance of the athlete unless indicated otherwise on the registration form. Qualifying scores must be taken after the previous year's sports season and should be taken as close to registration as possible.
4. **SCRATCH REFUND POLICY** – Agencies will be eligible for delegate fee refunds for State competitions if they call the Headquarters office by the date listed on the event descriptions page (one for each competition). Scratches called in after the deadline or no-shows at the competition will not be eligible for refunds.
5. **ADVANCEMENT** - If the number of athletes eligible for advancement exceeds the number of allotted quota, athletes shall be selected as follows\*:
  - a. Priority is given to first-place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event. If the number of first-place finishers exceeds the quota, athletes must be selected by random draw.
  - b. If there are not enough first-place finishers to fill the quota, all first-place finishers shall advance. The remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of second-place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.



- c. If the quota is large enough for all second-place finishers to advance, the remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of all third-place finishers from all divisions of the event/sport.
  - d. Repeat this process as necessary until the quota is filled.  
\*An Agency may remove an athlete from eligibility for advancement for non-compliance with practice attendance policies, Code of Conduct violations, suspensions, behavior problems, etc.
6. **MEDICAL REFUNDS** – If a delegate cannot attend a competition due to a medical reason, a refund may be obtained by the Agency if the SOWI Medical Refund Form (with doctor's signature) is submitted to the Headquarters office within 10 days after the competition. The Medical Refund Form can be found in the Agency Managers Handbook under Forms for Duplication and is listed in the table of contents.
7. **COACHES/CHAPERONES - COACHES AND CHAPERONES ATTENDING STATE COMPETITIONS AS DELEGATES MUST BE AT LEAST 16 YEARS OF AGE AND SOWI "CLASS A" APPROVED.** An Agency must have a minimum athlete/coach ratio of 4:1 or a maximum athlete/coach ratio of 3:1. Any athlete/coach ratio lower than 3:1 must be approved by your Regional office before submittal of an event registration form (a Special Needs form must also be submitted). Approval cannot be given for ratios of athletes:chaperones greater than 4:1.
8. **ALL SOWI TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITIONS** – Dogs are **not allowed** at any SOWI events, with the exception of service dogs (with proper certification and identification) or at special supervised events (i.e. Victory Village) with prior approval from SOWI.
9. **TEAM SPORTS ENTRIES – SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT TESTS** – All volleyball and bocce teams (including Unified Sports®) must submit Skills Achievement Tests' scores on their entry forms for Regional, district or State competitions. The Skills Achievement Test is recommended for coaches to use in other team sports as an assessment tool to assess the skill level of an athlete. Skills Achievement Test information can be found in the general rules for volleyball and bocce, and in the appendix for other sports.
10. **SPORTS – SPORTS PARTICIPATION PER SEASON** – SOWI athletes may train in as many sports as they wish; however, athletes are only allowed to compete in official SOWI competition in one sport per sports season.
11. **TEAM SPORTS-PARTICIPATION AT REGIONAL/DISTRICT/SECTIONAL COMPETITION** – In accordance with Article I of the Special Olympics General Rules, all athletes must participate at the previous level of competition in order to advance. Athletes physically absent from a lower competition for any reason are ineligible to advance to the next level of competition. (See S.O. General Rules Section A – Criteria for Advancement to Higher Level Competition)
12. **TEAM SPORTS-PARTICIPATION IN GAMES** – Each coach must offer every athlete the opportunity to play in each game.
13. **PROPOSED RULE CHANGES** - Proposals for any rules changes for SOWI events may be submitted using the Rules Change Proposal form located in the Forms for Duplication section of the Agency Management Handbook. Proposals for rules changes must be

submitted to the Headquarters office no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> annually for inclusion in the following year's Competition Guide.

14. **WEATHER CANCELLATIONS** – The SOWI staff and games management personnel will make the decision to cancel or delay competition with the safety of all participants in mind. In the event that a competition is conducted and an Agency chooses not to attend, that Agency shall forfeit any chance for its athletes to advance to the next level of competition. In addition, any games registration fees paid will not be refunded.
15. **STATE REGISTRATION FEES** – Agency State registration fees must be paid within 30 days of the scratch deadline for the event registered. Agencies failing to comply will be placed on provisional status and denied services until they come into compliance. All Agencies that are registered with an address within 30 miles of a State competition are required to attend the event utilizing one of the commuter options only.
16. **RECRUITMENT OF CURRENT SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES** – If an Agency recruits an existing Special Olympics athlete who is not registered with their Agency to participate with their Agency, then the Agency manager of that Agency must notify the athlete's home/permanent Agency manager of this development and obtain a copy of that athlete's current medical form.
17. **OVERNIGHT HOUSING STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR** :
  - a) **Supervision:** The chaperone/ athlete ratio of at least one properly registered chaperone to every four athletes must be maintained during overnight events. Proper supervision can be maintained without having a chaperon present in the room at all times. All chaperones must be screened in accordance with the Special Olympics Volunteer Screening Policy.
  - b) **Gender:** Athletes and volunteers may not share a room with an athlete or volunteer of the opposite sex with the following exception only:
    - i. Married athletes who are both attending the event as members of a registered delegation,
    - ii. Married volunteers who are both attending the event as part of a registered delegation. This exception does not apply if one of the volunteers is required to share a room with an athlete (other than the married couple's child).
    - iii. Family members of the opposite sex who serve as a one on one chaperon of the related athlete.
    - iv. Housing in a facility that has multiple private rooms in addition to living space such as a condominium or pod-style dormitory. Both males and females may be assigned to one condominium if necessary, but private rooms may not be shared by the opposite sex. Chaperones must be also be assigned to the condominium and the chaperone/ athlete ratio must be maintained.
    - v. use of barracks or other large facility where large numbers of individuals are assigned to one room. Athletes and volunteers must be separated as much as possible by gender (ex: females on one side and males on another).

- c) **Young Athletes** – Young Athletes events that involved overnight activities require increased supervision and therefore, Young Athletes participants must be accompanied by a properly registered and screened parent, guardian or individual designated by a parent or guardian at all overnight activities. Rooming assignments for Young Athletes should be separate from the remainder of the delegation whenever possible (for example, separate hotel rooms).
- d) **Best practices.** The local Agency handles assigning individuals to specific rooms. SOWI recommends minor-age and adult-age athletes not be housed together and that there is consideration of size, ability levels, maturity and behavior issues. SOWI depends on local Agencies to know their own delegates and make housing assignments accordingly. Room assignment lists must be turned into the front desk and Tournament Central upon checking into the hotel/residence hall.

Hotel rooms are assigned at a ratio of three participants of the same gender per room, (i.e. double/double room, king room with a roll-a-way or hide-a-bed sofa). Whenever possible, each member of a delegation should be assigned to his or her own bed. If bed sharing is required, an athlete may not share a bed with a chaperone unless the chaperone is a parent or sibling of the athlete and has been registered and screened in compliance with the volunteer registration and screening policy. The following techniques should be used to minimize the number of athletes required to share beds:

  - i. Request cots or roll-away beds from the housing facility.
  - ii. Use air mattresses to increase the number of separate bed spaces available.
  - iii. If bed sharing is required, consider having the athletes pack sleeping bags, and sleep in them on top of the linens provided.
- e) **Best Practices for Supervision.**

**Hotels:** Whenever possible, reserve connecting rooms so that chaperones have direct access to the athletes' room(s). If connecting rooms are not available, and the chaperone is in a room separate from the athletes for which he or she is responsible:

  - i. Ensure that the chaperone has a key to the athletes' room(s)
  - ii. Ensure that the athlete know how to reach the chaperone at all times
  - iii. Consider using hall monitors

**Condo/ Dorm or other facility with multiple private rooms:** Whenever possible, leave the doors to private rooms open so that chaperons can monitor each room.

**Barracks or other facility with multiple beds in one room:** Whenever possible chaperones should be assigned to a location in close proximity to the athletes he or she is supervising.

**Family Members:** Prohibit family members from staying in athlete housing unless the family member is an official member of the registered delegation and is screened in compliance with the Special Olympics Volunteer Screening Policy.

- f) University residence hall rooms are assigned one participant per bed, two beds per room with participants of the same gender sharing a room (this may mean an athlete and chaperone must share a room).
- g) An Agency may request a variance to the room assignment ratio for situations that warrant special consideration, i.e. due to athlete behavior issues an athlete needs to be one-on-one with a coach in a hotel room. Requests must be in writing and included with the State games/tournament registration materials.
- h) Agencies are responsible for ensuring that all parents, volunteers and family members, etc. are Class A registered volunteers when participating in Agency activities.
- g) Use of pools – Agencies may use pools when traveling only if they are able to provide a certified lifeguard for every 20 athletes who are swimming.

**18. MOCKERY OF THE GAME** – If a team or an athlete in an individual sport exhibits behavior that makes a mockery of the competition, that team or individual may be disqualified from competition, thus forfeiting the game/competition. Examples of behavior that may result in enforcement of this policy are (but not limited to): basketball – intentionally shooting into your own basket that your team is defending; soccer – intentionally shooting into your own goal; softball – intentionally causing an out for your team or allowing the opposing team to score; individual race – intentionally slowing down at the end of the race to taunt or embarrass the fellow racers or to “sandbag” thus providing a slower qualifying score for the next level of competition.

**19. COMMERCIAL MESSAGES ON UNIFORMS**

a. **Commercial Messages on Athlete Uniforms and Competition Numbers.** In order to avoid commercial exploitation of persons with an intellectual disability, no uniforms and no bibs or other signs bearing competition numbers that are worn by Special Olympics athletes during any competition or during Opening or Closing Ceremonies of any games may be emblazoned with commercial names or commercial messages. The only commercial markings that may be displayed on athletes’ uniforms during games competitions and opening and closing ceremonies are the normal commercial markings of the manufacturer. For purposes of this subsection, “normal commercial markings” are limited to the following:

- 1) On larger clothing items, such as shirts, jackets, pants, jerseys and sweatshirts, one logo or commercial name per clothing item is permissible, if that name or display does not exceed an area of six square inches or about 39 square centimeters (ex. a display measuring 2”x 3” or 5.08cm x 7.62cm);
- 2) On small clothing items, such as caps, socks, hats, gloves and belts, one logo or commercial name per clothing item is permissible, if that name or display does not exceed an area of three square inches or 19.35 square centimeters; and
- 3) On athletic shoes, no logos or commercial names are permissible except for name and logos that are included by the manufacturer on athletic shoes that are sold to the general public.

b. **Commercial Markings on Other Athlete Apparel or Accessories.** Special Olympics athletes who are not engaged in competition or in Opening/Closing Ceremonies may wear, carry or use at games venues other than the sites of competition (such as at training or practice sessions) clothing and/or non-apparel items that are not part of their sports equipment (such as

tote bags,) that contain small and attractively designed identifications of corporate or organizational sponsors.

c. **Displays of Commercial Messages at Opening Ceremonies.** The Opening Ceremony of all games shall celebrate the athletic skill, accomplishments, and courage of Special Olympics athletes in a colorful atmosphere of dignity and joy consistent with the Olympic spirit and the founding principles. It is the policy of Special Olympics, Incorporated that no banners or other signage bearing the names of commercial sponsors or their products may be displayed at the site of the opening ceremony.

# **MEDICAL POLICIES**

## **Medical Equipment and Safety Items**

- If medical device is worn, it must be approved prior to competition due to potential safety risk to other participants. This includes any device worn that covers the face, lower arm (from the elbow to the wrist), knee or lower leg. The completion of a Special Needs form will be required.
- Due to safety reasons, some medical devices (braces, helmets, etc.) may not be worn in competition and for that reason must be pre-approved.
- For safety reasons, medical alert bracelets are allowed to be worn but must be secured (secured with athletic tape, covered with a sweatband, etc.). It is suggested; if possible the item can be removed and held by the coach during competition.

## **Team Practice**

- A coach certified in CPR and first aid should be present at all practices.
- At a minimum, a first aid kit should be present and readily available at all practices.
- A kit should include a minimum: gloves, CPR mask, sterile gauze, assorted bandages, elastic bandages and a chemical ice package.
- The location of the nearest phone (ideally a cell phone) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) (if available) should be known to all coaches.

## **Regional Competition**

- A Class A registered volunteer or Special Olympics staff member certified in, at a minimum, CPR and first aid must be present and pre-identified to deal with medical emergencies arising during competition.
- Additional medical staff volunteers can be Class B registered volunteers.
- The Regional Management Team should ensure that a properly stocked first aid kit(s) is available for medical volunteers.
- The location of the nearest phone (ideally a cell phone) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) should be known to all medical volunteers.
- A Regional office should keep copies on file of CPR/First Aid certifications or other licensures of all medical volunteers.

## **State Competition**

- Medical coverage at all State competitions is provided by the State tournament medical staff.
- The State tournament medical staff is led by the Special Olympics Medical Director.
- All members of the medical staff must be certified in a minimum of adult CPR and either certification of first aid or above, documented advanced training, or documented experience in the health care field. The Medical Director is a Wisconsin-licensed physician.

## **Services Provided**

- During tournaments, the medical staff provides the immediate evaluation and treatment, and follow-up as appropriate, for illness and injury suffered by athletes and coaches/chaperones during the tournament.
- In addition, the medical staff provides initial evaluation and treatment of volunteers/staff and spectators of the tournament.

- The medical staff is NOT present to provide the routine care of the chronic medical conditions of the athletes.
  - It is the responsibility of the **coaches** and **chaperones** to ensure athletes take their medication as directed and are able to deal with all foreseen aspects of the athletes' medical conditions, i.e. blood sugar testing, insulin shots, etc.

### **Level of Care**

- Exact first aid evaluation and treatment performed depends on the level of certification and training of medical staff present.
- All staff provides care at the maximum level of their comfort and as allowed by training, equipment available, and state law.

### **Non-Medical Staff Health Care Professionals**

- Special Olympics designated medical staff has final authority on all medical matters during Special Olympics tournaments. If a non-medical staff health care professional is present, they may assist with a medical emergency at the discretion of the medical staff. Unless the health care professional is the parent or guardian of the athlete, the medical staff retains responsibility for care of the athlete.

### **Physician/Licensed Independent Providers**

- Physician or licensed independent provider members of the medical staff may perform skills and administer medications at their own discretion.
- Special Olympics International malpractice insurance coverage currently does not extend to physicians.

### **Supervision**

- The medical staff acts under direction of the games management team.
- The senior medical staff present has final authority in medical matters.

### **Information to be Provided to Medical Staff by Management Team**

- Phone numbers: emergency and non-emergency
  - Local hospital emergency departments/urgent care centers
  - Campus security/police department
  - Tournament Central
  - Important housing and dining contacts
- Maps
  - Event locations
  - Surrounding area
  - Hospital locations

### **Competition Procedures**

1. Official stops contest because of injury or illness
2. Official instructs scoring bench to start clock if appropriate (i.e. injury time or recovery time)
3. Official beckons coach and medical staff to examine athlete
  - NOTE: Neither official or coach can deny medical staff the opportunity to examine the athlete
4. Medical staff will determine whether the athlete can continue
  - The most senior medical staff member's decision is final in cases of difference of opinion

5. Medical staff will inform the following individuals of their opinion: athlete, coach, official
    - If the medical staff determines athlete cannot continue, this decision is final
    - If the medical staff determines athlete can continue:
      - the coach may decide not to allow athlete to continue, this decision being final
      - the game official may determine that the athlete cannot continue if injury poses undue threat to other athletes such as blood on uniform
  6. Official will notify the opposing team, scoring bench and contest management as appropriate
- The medical staff has the authority and is expected to proceed onto the area of play even though action may be continuing because the game officials are unaware of an injured participant. The team of the injured athlete should not be charged a time out or any other penalty for such action by the medical staff.
  - If it is determined that an athlete has experienced a loss of consciousness, he/she may not return to competition until cleared by a physician. See Concussion Section for more information
  - Every attempt should be made to inform the coach and parents/legal guardian of injury/illness as appropriate.

#### **Evaluation by Higher Medical Care**

- If the medical staff determines that an EMS evaluation is necessary, EMS will be summoned, regardless of the patient's wishes. Upon arrival of the EMS, care of the patient is transferred.
- If the patient requires evaluation or treatment in an emergency department (ED) or urgent care (UC) center but not EMS transport (i.e. stitches, possible fracture, etc), patient should be transported via private vehicle to the nearest facility.
  - If the patient is an athlete, a coach or chaperone must accompany him/her to the ED/UC.
  - If a private vehicle is not available (i.e. team came on a bus), the medical staff and management team will secure transportation.

#### **Documentation and Medical Records**

- As per SOWI requirements, all athletes are required to have a current medical form on file with the Headquarters office.
- Coaches must have a copy of each athlete's medical form with them available for immediate review in case of emergency, especially in the case that an athlete must be transported to the hospital.
- The Special Olympics First Report of Accident/Incident is for insurance purposes and filed with the Program office. It should be completed for all injury/illness that require either immediate or delayed follow-up or the illness/injury that is the result of unforeseen circumstances.
- It is the combined responsibility of the medical staff and patient/coach to complete the Special Olympics First Report of Accident/Incident form
- A Special Olympics illness/treatment report or similar form should be filled out for all persons suffering a moderate or serious illness/injury or requiring further medical attention.
- All levels of injury/illness (any contact with athlete, spectator, coach, chaperone, volunteer,



etc.), must be recorded in a medical log.

### **Unconscious Participant**

- A participant rendered unconscious (unresponsive to verbal stimuli) may not return to competition that day without written consent of a physician.

### **Oxygen**

- Oxygen may only be administered for medical purposes.

### **State Office Contact Information**

- Carol Ellis, Chief Operating Officer: (608) 442-5663
- Bob Whitehead, Vice President of Program Services: (608) 442-5661
- Medical Director: Michael Clark, MD
  - [mclark911@gmail.com](mailto:mclark911@gmail.com)
  - Cell: (715) 218-5774

### **Concussion Information**

What is a **concussion**? A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal functioning of the brain (changes how the cells in the brain normally work).

- A concussion can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Basically, any force that is transmitted to the head causing the brain to literally bounce around or twist within the skull can result in a concussion.
- Over 90% of concussions do not involve loss of consciousness. It is important to note that a concussion can happen to anyone in any sport or athletic activity.

Concussion affects people in four areas of function:

1. Physical – This describes how a person may feel: headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, etc.
2. Thinking – Poor memory and concentration, responds to questions more slowly, asks repetitive questions. Concussion can cause an altered state of awareness.
3. Emotions - A concussion can make a person more irritable and cause mood swings.
4. Sleep – Concussions frequently cause changes in sleeping patterns, which can increase fatigue.

Pursuant to State Law and SOWI Policy: **An coach, or official, or health care provider present at a practice or competition shall remove an athlete if he/she exhibits signs, symptoms, or behavior consistent with a concussion or head injury –OR– the coach, official, or health care provider suspects the person has sustained a concussion or head injury.**

### **Evaluation**

Common Symptoms Reported by Athlete:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance problems
- Dizziness
- Double or fuzzy vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling mentally foggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Ringing in the ears

### Signs, Symptoms, or Behaviors Consistent with Concussion: *(What others can see in an injured athlete)*

- Appear dazed or stunned
- Change in level of consciousness or awareness
- Confused about what to do
- Forgets play(s)
- Memory loss/amnesia
- Unsure of score, game, opponent
- Clumsy
- Slow to answer questions or follow directions
- Changes in behavior or personality
- Loss of consciousness
- Asks repetitive questions
- Can't recall events before or after hit/ blow
- Simple Sideline Tests
  - Modified Maddocks Questions (Any miss significant)
    - What venue are we at today?
    - Which half of the game are we in?
    - Who scored last in the game?
    - Which team did you play the last game?
    - Did you win the last game?
  - Concentration Test: Ask athlete to recite months of the year backwards from current month
    - If have marked difficulty, concerning for concussion
  - Balance Test: Tests ability of athlete to hold three positions for 20 seconds each; with hands on hips and eyes closed
    - Positions
      - Both legs on the ground next to each other
      - Single leg stance with non-dominant leg on ground (hip is flexed to approximately 30° and knee flexed to approximately 45°)
      - Tandem stance with non-dominant foot in front of the dominant foot
    - More than 5 errors below across the three positions means removal from activity
      - moving the hands off of hips
      - opening the eyes
      - step stumble or fall
      - lifting the forefoot or heel off of the testing surface
      - remaining out of the proper testing position for greater than 5 second
  - Finger to Nose: Have athlete hold arm extended at shoulder height, then touch nose 5 times in 4 seconds with return to fully extended position between nose touches
    - Difficulty suggests concussion

### Removal and Return to Activity

**If an athlete exhibits any of the signs, symptoms, or behavior consistent with a concussion or head injury –OR– you simply suspect the person has sustained a concussion or head injury the athlete must be removed from all physical activity immediately.**

Injured athletes can exhibit many or just a few of the signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or head injury.

A **health care provider** must evaluate the athlete for concussion. An athlete that has been removed from practice or competition because of a determined or suspected concussion or head injury may not participate (practice or competition) again until he or she is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider to return to the activity

No athlete should be allowed to return to play from concussion on the same day.

*Not every athlete removed from play will be concussed. It may be appropriate to remove an athlete to err on the side of safety. If a concussion is suspected, the athlete must be evaluated by a health care provider. If health care provider rules out a concussion during a side-line assessment, the athlete can be returned to play if written clearance is provided. "When in doubt, hold them out".*

When you suspect and/or confirm that a player has a concussion or head injury:

- Immediately remove the athlete from play.
- Ensure that the athlete is evaluated by a trained health care provider.
- Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the suspected and/or confirmed concussion. If a trained health care provider is not available on site at the time of the injury, provide parents/guardians with recommendations on health care providers in the area that can evaluate for a concussion.
- A person who has been removed from a youth athletic activity because of a determined or suspected concussion or head injury may not participate again until he or she is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance from the health care provider to return to the activity.

A player recovering from a concussion must be carefully observed to be sure they are not feeling worse. Even though the athlete is not playing, never send a concussed athlete to the locker room alone and never allow the injured athlete to drive home.

Some injured athletes will require emergency care. Anytime you are uncomfortable with an athlete on the sideline, it is reasonable to activate the Emergency Medical System (911).

The following are reasons to activate the EMS, as any worsening signs or symptoms may represent a medical emergency:

- Loss of consciousness, this may indicate more serious head injury
- Decreasing level of alertness
- Unusually drowsy
- Severe or worsening headache
- Seizure
- Persistent vomiting
- Difficulty breathing

#### Additional Information

The appearance of signs, symptoms and behavior of a concussion may be immediate, or maybe delayed several hours, days, or even weeks after the event. It is imperative to notify the parent or guardian when an athlete is removed from play because they are thought to have a concussion.

Most concussions are temporary and they resolve without causing residual problems. Concussion symptoms in children and adolescents take longer than symptoms in adults to resolve. It is not uncommon for symptoms in young athletes to last a few weeks. These symptoms of headache, difficulty concentrating, poor memory and sleep disturbances can result in academic troubles among other problems. Concussion symptoms may even last weeks to months (post-concussion syndrome).

<sup>1</sup> The law defines a "Health care provider" as a person to whom all of the following apply:

- He or she holds a credential that authorizes the person to provide health care.
- He or she is trained and has experience in evaluating and managing pediatric concussions and head injuries.
- He or she is practicing within the scope of his or her credential.

# ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Wisconsin prides itself in sponsoring high quality sports training and competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this code of conduct is to establish a high standard of athlete behavior, which will ensure the safety and well being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All athletes (including Unified Sports® Partners) are expected to abide by the Athlete Code of Conduct as established by Special Olympics Wisconsin. Athletes should be reminded that **participation in Special Olympics is a privilege, not a right, and that the Agency manager has the authority to make immediate accommodations until final decisions can be made.**

By agreeing to abide by the Special Olympics Wisconsin Code of Conduct, each athlete agrees to adhere to the following athlete behavior:

- Uphold the mission, philosophy, principles and policies of Special Olympics, Inc. and Special Olympics Wisconsin
- Behave in a manner consistent with Special Olympics Wisconsin's core values of mutual respect, positive attitude, accountability, teamwork and dedication

## SPORTSMANSHIP

I will practice good sportsmanship.

I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.

I will not use bad language.

I will not swear or insult other persons.

I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

## TRAINING AND COMPETITION

I will train regularly.

I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.

I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.

I will always try my best during training, divisioning and competitions.

I will not "hold back" in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.

I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.

I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.

I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.

I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules, the International Federation and the National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

# ATHLETE STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

The following athlete behavior is unacceptable while participating in Special Olympics training or competition, including, but not limited to, practice, in transit, and at the competition venue:

- Profanity or verbal abuse
- Tobacco use in restricted areas
- Use of alcohol
- Physical or verbal sexual overtures
- Physical abuse\*
- Use of illegal drugs or any controlled substance\*
- Felony or misdemeanors (or any other illegal or socially unacceptable behavior) which seriously disrupts or impedes the participation of athletes or others\*
- Frequent unexcused absences
- Exhibition of poor sportsmanship
- Violent or disruptive behavior
- Any unwelcome physical contact
- Possession of harmful weapons\*

*\*Criminal offenses regardless of where it occurs may result in immediate suspension from any and all Special Olympics activities.*

## Guidelines for limiting or denying an athlete's involvement in SOWI

SOWI may limit or deny an athlete's participation based on the following:

- a. Admission or adjudication of involvement in abuse, neglect, sexual assault, or conduct involving violence or threat of violence (for example, assault and battery or armed robbery)
- b. Record of being charged with abuse, neglect, conduct involving violence or threat of violence (for example, assault and battery or armed robbery), or sexual assault with corroborating information
- c. Extreme or repeated violations of the SOWI Code of Conduct
- d. Current use of illegal drugs
- e. If the safety of other athletes is at risk

Not all situations or circumstances can be addressed in these guidelines. SOWI will address each situation on a case-by-case basis:

SOWI recommends all Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports® Partners review, understand and sign the Athlete Code of Conduct before sports training begins. If an athlete or Unified Sports® Partner participates in multiple sports seasons, he/she need only submit one form per SOWI sports year (i.e., October - September). The Agency manager should forward all signed forms to the area office before training begins and retain a copy in the agency files throughout the SOWI sports year.

Athlete/Unified Sports® Partner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Athlete's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency #: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature (If athlete is a minor or not their own guardian):  
\_\_\_\_\_

# ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT DISCIPLINARY STEPS

The Agency manager is permitted to use the following disciplinary steps depending on the severity of the incident:

- Verbal warning given to the athlete
- Written warning given to the athlete with a copy to the Region office and parent/guardian or caseworker
- Personal meeting with the athlete to review unacceptable behavior and work out a plan for improvement
- If the athlete is under 18, or over 18 and not their own guardian, he/she will be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian or caseworker. If the athlete is over 18 and is his/her own guardian, he/she may choose to have another adult present. The meeting will be documented in writing and copies distributed to the athlete, Regional office, Headquarters office, Agency file, and parent/guardian or caseworker.
- Suspension from practices or competition during the specific sport season
- The Regional office must be contacted before an Agency manager suspends an athlete. The Regional office will discuss the circumstances and approve the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the athlete and parent/guardian (or caseworker) and a copy will be sent to the Headquarters office.

**Any further action must be referred to the Regional office. The Regional office and Headquarters staff member responsible for Regional management will approve any further action to be taken.**

Further action could be, but is not limited to:

- Suspension for more than one sport season
- Expulsion for one year or more
- Permanent expulsion

## **Appeal Process**

The athlete has the right to appeal any disciplinary actions with the Regional office. The athlete or representative must submit a written request for a meeting to appeal the decision within 30 days of being notified of the disciplinary action. SOWI will review the request and determine whether to uphold the decision of the Regional office or hold an appeal meeting to obtain additional information.

If deemed necessary, the appeal will be heard by a Regional and/or Headquarters staff representative, and an Agency manager (either the manager from that Agency or if deemed necessary a manager not involved with the situation). A decision to reverse, amend or affirm a disciplinary action will be submitted in writing to the Agency manager and should include a plan of action for the athlete to correct the unacceptable behavior that led to the disciplinary action.

Special Olympics Wisconsin prides itself in sponsoring high quality sports training and competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this code of conduct is to establish a high standard of athlete behavior, which will ensure the safety and well being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All athletes (including Unified Sports® Partners) are expected to abide by the Athlete Code of Conduct as established by Special Olympics Wisconsin.

By agreeing to abide by the Special Olympics Wisconsin Code of Conduct, each athlete agrees to adhere to the following athlete behavior:

- Uphold the philosophy, principles and policies of Special Olympics, Inc. and Special Olympics Wisconsin
- Behave in a manner consistent with Special Olympics Wisconsin's core values of mutual respect, integrity, positive attitude, accountability, teamwork and dedication.

Each athlete further agrees and acknowledges that participation in SOWI is voluntary and SOWI may terminate an athlete's participation if the athlete fails to follow SOWI rules and policies, including the athlete Code of Conduct.

# SPECTATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT<sup>1</sup>

"Special Olympics celebrates and strives to promote the spirit of sportsmanship and a love of participation in sports for its own sake". This is one of the founding principles of Special Olympics. With this in mind, Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) has established the following Spectators' Code of Conduct in order to promote a positive environment for athletes to showcase their talents and compete in.

- Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches and officials.
- Act appropriately. Do not taunt or disturb fans. Enjoy the competition together.
- Cheer good plays of all participants, and refrain from "booing" opponents.
- Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play. Negative cheers or chants that encourage an athlete to fail are not allowed.
- Support the referees, officials and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
- Be responsible for your own safety and remain alert to help prevent accidents.
- Abstain from using tobacco products or alcoholic beverages at the sports venues, athlete housing or Special Olympics entertainment venues. Use of tobacco products or alcoholic beverages is prohibited in the before-mentioned areas. In addition, spectators under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants are subject to removal from a Special Olympics venue.
- Conduct all cheering from the appropriate spectator areas. Spectators are not allowed on team benches, near the scoring table, within enclosed start/finish areas or on the competition surface for an event.
- Respect locker rooms as private areas for athletes, coaches and officials.
- Be supportive after the competition, win or lose. Recognize good effort, teamwork and sportsmanship.

**Competition officials (referees, umpires, etc.) and event management personnel reserve the right to warn spectators of undesirable behavior and request immediate correction of the behavior.** If spectators display inappropriate and disruptive behavior that interferes with competition, competition may be stopped until the spectator(s) is/are removed from the viewing area and competition venue. Examples of inappropriate and disruptive behavior include (but are not limited to):

- use of obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous manner at any time
- use of tobacco products or alcoholic beverages in restricted areas
- taunting of players, coaches, officials or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threat of violence or physical violence
- negative cheers or chants that encourage an athlete to fail i.e. in basketball, chanting "Air Ball" during a free throw attempt; in volleyball, chanting "Side Out" while a player attempts to serve the ball; in athletics race walking, cheering for an athlete to "run they're catching you", etc.
- intentionally creating a loud noise or disturbance at inappropriate times during a competition (according to the rules of the sport) in order to disrupt the performance of an athlete i.e. blowing a whistle or horn during a basketball, soccer or volleyball game; creating noise at the start of an aquatics race after the official has indicated being quiet for the start of the race; creating a noise during a gymnastics routine to intentionally disrupt the concentration of the performing athlete; use of a bullhorn to cheer on or coach athletes, etc.

Violations may result in further action by SOWI including, but not limited to: verbal warning, written warning, restriction for a period of time, or from specific venues or competitions. Suspensions may be appealed in writing to the Regional office or the Headquarters office. The appeal process will follow the same procedures as volunteer suspension appeals. Please keep in mind the athlete-created SOWI sportsmanship slogan:

## SPORTSMANSHIP MAKES WINNERS!

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the USA Hockey "Spectators' Code of Conduct" with modifications for S.O. competitions.

# VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

## Special Olympics Wisconsin Volunteer Code of Conduct

SOWI prides itself in sponsoring high quality sports training and competitions for people with intellectual disabilities. The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish a high standard of volunteer behavior that will ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All volunteers are expected to abide by the code of conduct and standards of behavior as established by SOWI. Volunteers should be reminded that volunteering for SOWI is a privilege, not a right, and that the Agency manager has the authority to make immediate accommodations until final decisions can be made.

By agreeing to abide by the SOWI Code of Conduct, each volunteer agrees to adhere to the following coach/volunteer behavior:

- uphold the philosophy, principles and policies of Special Olympics, Inc. and SOWI
- behave in a manner consistent with SOWI's core values of mutual respect, integrity, positive attitude accountability, teamwork and dedication

The following coach/volunteer behavior is unacceptable:

- profanity or verbal abuse
- tobacco use in restricted areas
- use of alcohol
- frequent unexcused absences
- exhibition of poor sportsmanship
- not following the rules of a sport
- not providing adequate athlete supervision
- submission of false or inaccurate competition qualification information
- violent or disruptive behavior
- physical or verbal sexual overtures
- any unwelcome physical contact
- use of illegal drugs or any controlled substance\*
- possession of harmful weapons\*
- physical abuse\*
- felony or misdemeanors (or any other illegal or socially unacceptable behavior) which disrupts or impedes the participation of athletes or others\*

***\*Volunteers include the following: Coaches, Agency managers, chaperones, and day-of volunteers.***

***\*These offenses will result in immediate suspension from any and all Special Olympics activities.***

## Volunteer Code of Conduct Disciplinary Steps

Should the behavior and/or attitude of any volunteer be contrary to the Volunteer Code of Conduct, then the following disciplinary steps may be taken by the Agency manager or a staff member from the Regional or Headquarters office:

- 1) verbal warning given to the volunteer with a request to remedy the situation for continued participation
- 2) written warning given to the volunteer with a copy to the Regional office and if a minor, the parent/guardian or caseworker
- 3) personal meeting with the volunteer to review unacceptable behavior and to work out a plan for improvement
  - If volunteers are under 18, or over 18 and not their own guardian, they will be accompanied by their parent/guardian or caseworker. If the coaches/volunteers are over 18 and is their own guardian, e/she may choose to have another adult present. The meeting will be documented in writing and copies distributed to: the volunteer, Regional office, State Headquarters office, Agency file, parent/guardian or caseworker.



- 4) Suspension from volunteer service including, but not limited to, practices or competition
- The Regional office must be contacted before an Agency manager suspends a volunteer. The Regional office will discuss the circumstances and approve the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the volunteer and parent/guardian (or caseworker) and a copy will be sent to the State Headquarters office.

Any further action must be referred to the Regional office. The Regional office and Chief Operating Officer will approve any further action to be taken. Further action could be, but is not limited to:

- suspension for more than one sport season
- expulsion for one year or more
- permanent expulsion

### **Volunteer Code of Conduct Disciplinary Appeals Process**

A volunteer has the right to appeal a disciplinary action imposed on him/her with the Regional office or Chief Operating Officer. The coach/volunteer or their representative must submit a written request for a meeting to appeal the decision within 30 days of being notified of the disciplinary action. Based on the written appeal request, SOWI will make the decision on whether an appeal meeting is necessary. The relationship between SOWI and volunteers is an "at will" arrangement and it may be terminated at anytime without cause by either the volunteer or SOWI.

If deemed necessary, the appeal will be heard by a Code of Conduct Appeals Committee. A decision to reverse, amend or affirm a disciplinary action will be submitted in writing to the individual and Agency manager and may include a plan of action for the coach/volunteer to correct the unacceptable behavior that led to the disciplinary action. The decision of the appeal committee is final and may not be appealed further.

### **Volunteer Grievance Procedure**

Specific complaints against a coach or volunteer are to be filed with SOWI at the level of organization in which the Code of Conduct violation(s) occurred. Code of Conduct violations occurring at the local agency or regional /district event are to be filed with the Regional office. Code of Conduct violations occurring at a sectional or State event are to be filed with the Vice President of Program Services. All complaints are to be in writing citing specific behaviors inconsistent with the philosophy of Special Olympics. Name and contact information of the person making the complaint is also required.

Within two weeks of receiving a written complaint on a coach or volunteer, SOWI will implement the following process of review:

- 1) Contact complainant and other persons involved to further discuss the nature of the complaint and confirm all information.
- 2) Contact the Regional office and send them a copy of the complaint.
- 3) The Regional office will contact the agency manager, explain the nature of the complaint and ask the Agency manager to confirm or deny knowledge of the allegation.
- 4) If the Agency manager confirms the complaint, they will be asked to address the issue with the volunteer and take disciplinary action if required. Severity of the disciplinary action will be determined by SOWI.
- 5) If the Agency manager cannot confirm the complaint, SOWI will convene a volunteer review team consisting of the Regional office, Agency manager and the Chief Operating Officer. The review team will interview the volunteer named in the complaint. If the nature of the complaint is confirmed, the review team shall determine the severity of disciplinary action. If the nature of the complaint is not readily confirmable, then the review team shall interview the complainant and determine if any action is justified or needed in settling the issue of the complaint.

The decision of the review team is final and cannot be appealed.

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