

TRAINING

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ATHLETE TRAINING GUIDELINES

Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) offers year-round training and competition in a wide variety of sports, both team and individual. The *Athlete Medical Form* and the *Participant Release Form* in Special Olympics serve as an athlete's registration for Special Olympics and must be completed and approved before an athlete may participate in any Special Olympics training program. Once registered, an athlete must train for at least eight training sessions prior to a Regional or District competition. SOWI recommends that for optimal results, an athlete should train for one hour at least three times per week for eight to 10 weeks for each sport prior to Regional/District competition.

SOWI follows the *Official Special Olympics Sports Rules*, which are based on International Sports Federation and National Governing body rules. Rules can be found on the Special Olympics, Inc. website at SpecialOlympics.org. Because Special Olympics is a sports program for individuals with intellectual disabilities, people sometimes question the "fairness" of sports rules enforcement. But as veteran coaches will tell you, knowing and playing by the rules is one of the greatest benefits Special Olympics offers its athletes. Why?

1. Impaired does not mean incapable. Special Olympics athletes are capable of learning and competing within sports rules. Challenging athletes in this manner adds to the pride and sense of accomplishment they experience.
2. It is unfair to athletes who are properly trained and who are following the rules to compete against others who are not.
3. Many Special Olympics athletes eventually move into other sports programs (school, parks and recreation, community leagues, etc.). They will be better prepared for that transition if learning and competing by rules is one of the skills they take with them from Special Olympics.

Coaching Guides

Coaching Guides are sport-specific training manuals designed to aid coaches, teachers and family members in training individuals with intellectual disabilities. Each guide provides an overview of the sport, equipment, facilities, long-term goals, short-term objectives, task analysis, teaching suggestions and more. *Coaching Guides* are available on both the Special Olympics, Inc. website at SpecialOlympics.org and the SOWI website the coaches Sports tab, then Coach's Corner, and then the Special Olympics Coaching Resources Website link.

CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

State Games Certification

The required certification process requires all coaches to complete the SOWI on-line general coaches certification (available at www.specialolympicswisconsin.org). The general coaches' certification will replace the sports specific certification as the requirement for advancement to the state games. All currently certified coaches may continue to advance with their current sports-specific certification until their certification expires at which time they will be required to complete the general certification. Coaches will be required to complete the general certification every three years. General certifications expire on December 31 of the third calendar year from the date the certification was completed.

State Games Certification Requirement

Advancement to State-level competition requires certified coaches to be registered as part of an advancing delegation and in attendance at the State Games. Each team advancing to State is required to have a certified coach (i.e. for two basketball teams advancing to State, two certified individuals are required). Likewise, each individual sport that advances to State-level competition is also required to have a certified coach. Coaches may only serve as the certified coach for one sport at the same State tournament. Certification must be completed on-line and must be completed no later than the Thursday following the State Games registration deadline in order to attend that State Games event. Teams or groups of individuals who do not have a certified coach who can be in attendance at the Games will not be allowed to advance to the State level. Teams or individuals found to be without the certified coach in attendance at the Games will be ejected.

Sport Specific Certification

Sports- specific certification will continue to be offered, but will no longer act as the requirement to advance to the state games. Sports- specific certification will be required for all coaches wishing to attend National or World Competitions (USA Games, National Invitational Tournaments, etc.). To become certified, a coach must be a registered Class A volunteer, complete the SOWI General Orientation, attend a Certified Training School, and complete the *Application for Sports Certification Form*. Once the completed form is turned into the Headquarters office, the coach's certification will be recorded and reflected on the Agency's volunteer roster. Coach certifications expire on December 31 of the third calendar year from the date of the sport-specific coaches training that was attended.

Minimum age to act as a coach for SOWI is 16

Class A Volunteers who are 16 or 17 years old and wish to coach at each practice and competition must be under the supervision of a SOWI registered Class A volunteer who is 18 years or older (the Class A volunteer need not be a certified coach). In order to act as the certified coach at State Games Tournament, a minor coach must complete the general coaching certification. Minor coaches may not act as a chaperone. Athletes must be chaperoned by a registered Class A volunteer who is 16 or older under the 1:4 chaperone to athlete ratio.

Maintaining Sports Specific Certifications

Coaching certifications expire on December 31 of the third calendar year from the date of the sport-specific training that was attended. In order to maintain a current sports specific certification, a coach must complete **one** education course and submit the *Application for Sports Re-Certification* **prior** to the December 31 expiration date. Please note that **ONE** education course will recertify you in all sports. On-line sports assessments are not required. The coaching certification will be processed and extended once the *Application for Sports Re-Certification* form is turned into the Headquarters office prior to the expiration date. If a certified coach lets his/her certification(s) expire, they will need to complete the sport-specific certified training school again and complete the necessary paperwork.

Approved Education Courses for Re-Certification Include, but are Not Limited to the Following:

- Certified Training School or advanced skills course – must be sport-specific to the certification
- Principles of Coaching or Coaching Special Olympic Athletes (*may only be taken one time for re-certification*)
- SOWI online course, Coaching Philosophy ***Please include a copy of a completed exercise*
- SOWI online course, Year Round Training
- SOWI online course, Healthy Boundaries & Relationships
- SONA online courses: [Principles of Coaching](#) , [Coaching Special Olympics Athletes](#), [Coaching Unified Sports](#) ***Please include a copy of the completion certificate*
- Online courses through the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS): www.nfhs.org ****Please include a copy of completion certificate from any online course.*
- Online courses through American Sport Education Program (ASEP): www.asep.com ***Please include a copy of completion certificate from any online course.*
- First Aid/ CPR Certification ***Please include a copy of the certification card*
- SOWI Leadership Conference, Coach Summit, or Family Health Forum

- Non-SOWI educational course—i.e. Personal Training Certification, college courses, Official's Certification, educational or professional in-services, conferences or seminars that pertain to working with people with disabilities, coaching, communication, conflict-resolution, etc.
- ***SOWI Educational Course Reporting Form must be completed after attendance and submitted with the Re-Certification Application to the Headquarters office.**

You do not need to get pre-approval for a non-SOWI event; however, if the event does not provide coaching development or in some way enhance the athlete experience, it may not be applicable to use for re-certification. If you attend a non-SOWI education course, you may need to complete a *SOWI Education Course Reporting Form* to submit with the *Application for Re-Certification*.

Application for Sports Certification, Application for Sports Re-Certification, and the SOWI Education Course Reporting Forms are available on the SOWI website and in the *Forms for Duplication* section of this handbook.

Certified Training

All SOWI Certified Training Schools (CTS) include SOWI information, risk management, safety, Code of Conduct, policies, etc., as well as a sport-specific component. There will be a certain number of CTS opportunities in every Region for volunteers to attend. When possible, CTS opportunities will be advertised on the calendar on the SOWI website and additionally, a CTS flyer will be sent to Agency managers to advertise to their volunteers. Agency managers are able to schedule a CTS opportunity for their Agency and/or community by directly contacting a State Certified Clinician. The process for an Agency manager to schedule a CTS is as follows:

- 1) Contact a State Certified Clinician
- 2) Determine the date, time and location and number of anticipated participants
- 3) The State Certified Clinicians will work directly with the Program Services Department and make arrangements for paperwork and training materials for the CTS. When possible, SOWI will advertise the CTS on the SOWI website and it will be open for all volunteers to attend.

If an Agency manager is interested in scheduling a CTS with a clinician who is not a State Certified Clinician, they must contact and get approval from the Regional Athletic Director or the Program Services Department at the SOWI Headquarters office. A clinician who is not a State Certified Clinician can only conduct a CTS with a SOWI representative present.

State Certified Clinicians

SOWI has established a list of State Certified Clinicians who have been selected and trained to solely represent the organization and train volunteers on behalf of SOWI. A list is available in this section of the handbook of the State Certified Clinicians. If a person is interested in becoming a State Certified Clinician, there is a formal application and selection process. Please contact the Program Services Department for more information.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

RE-CERTIFICATION

Q. What do I need to do to maintain my general coaching certification?

A. The general coaching certification must be completed every three years.

Q. Can I complete a continuing education course or certified training school to maintain my general coaching certification?

A. No. The general coaching certification can only be renewed by retaking the course every three years.

Q. For my sports-specific certification, do I have to attend a sport-specific training school for EVERY sport I am certified in?

A. No. You only need to complete ONE education course, no matter how many certifications you

Q. If I obtain a new sport certification, will it automatically re-certify my other sports specific certifications?

A. Yes You must complete and submit the *Application for Re-Certification*.

Q. For my sports specific certification, if I attend a seminar, conference, or in-service for my job, will that count as the educational course?

A. Possibly. If you are going to attend a course that is not through Special Olympics, you may confirm with the Program Services Department that the course will count towards re-certification.

Q. What other courses count for sports specific recertification?

A. There are many things that will qualify as the educational course for recertification (i.e. coaching course, working with people with disabilities, First Aid/CPR, risk management, sport training, injury prevention...to name a few). There will be a list of examples for recertification educational course options posted on our website and in the *Agency Manager Handbook*. Please check our website for a list of options.

Q. What do I have to submit from the educational course for proof of attendance?

A. You will need to submit two things in addition to a *Application for Re-Certification*: 1) proof of attendance or completion (i.e. a copy of registration confirmation or completion certification); and 2) a completed *SOWI Educational Course Reporting Form*.

Q. Why do I need to complete the SOWI Educational Course Reporting Form?

A. We want to ensure the course was beneficial to your coaching development. The form is a brief one-page document that allows you to explain how you will use what you learned with your athletes.

Q. If my sports certifications do expire, how do I get certified again?

A. You will need to attend a Certified Training Schools in the sport you wish to become certified in. Have your Agency manager sign a completed *Application for Sports Certification*, and send it to the Headquarters office.

Q. Will I be notified if my certifications are about to expire?

A. All coaches will receive two letters informing them of upcoming expirations. They will receive the first letter in January for a twelve-month notice and a second letter in June for a six-month notice. Additionally, Agency managers will still be able to track coach expirations on the website as well as on their volunteer rosters they receive. The letter is always TWO PAGES. Please turn the page over to read all of the information.

Q. If I am a USA or World Games coach will I be exempt for recertification?

A. There will be allowances and/or exceptions pertaining to recertification requirements for USA and World Games coaches that will be at the discretion of the Program Services Department.

TOPIC: CERTIFIED TRAINING SCHOOLS (CTS)

Q. How do I schedule or arrange a Certified Training School?

A. These are the steps for scheduling a Certified Training School:

1. Contact a State Certified Clinician that is certified for the sport skill you need to arrange a training school;
2. Secure a date, time and location for the training school to occur;
3. The State Certified Clinician will contact the Director of Training & Competition to post the training school on the website and for the necessary paperwork.

Q. Do I have to use a State Certified Clinician to conduct a training school?

A. No, you may still use a clinician who is from your community; however, in order to do so, you must coordinate the training school through your Regional Director of Sports.

Q. Will the Regional offices still be scheduling training schools?

A. Yes, the Regional will continue to schedule training schools.

Q. If we schedule a CTS on our own, and do not inform the Regional or Headquarters office, will you still count the CTS?

A. If you schedule a CTS and do not use a State Certified Clinician and do not work with the Regional or Headquarters office to conduct the CTS, it will not be counted for certification or recertification. Reason being, we are trying to establish consistent training schools and to allow this would defeat the purpose.

Q. If I've already attended a CTS can I still complete my paperwork for certification without attending a new one?

A. If you attended a school within the past year, you may still complete your certification process. The state Headquarters office must receive the certification application within one year of attending the CTS.

THE STATE CERTIFIED CLINICIANS
CONTACT LIST IS NOT COMPLETE FOR
USE YET. CONTACT INFORMATION WILL BE
DISTRIBUTED AS SOON AS PLANS ARE
CONFIRMED.



TRAINING SITE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Accreditation standards require that all training facilities and equipment are safe with a first aid kit, athlete emergency contacts and a phone and/or transportation available in case of an emergency.

The checklist below is not intended to cover every possible situation, but acts as a guideline for areas which could constitute injury hazards.

Acceptable?

Yes

No

Playing Surfaces – Indoor

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Irregular floor surfaces (wood separations, splinters, etc.)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Surfaces clean and free of dust, gum, wet or greasy areas, loose pieces of paper, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Electrical floor plate and outlet coverings fixed properly in position? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Electrical cords away from participant area and taped securely? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All extra equipment removed? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sufficient buffer zone between spectators? |

Playing Surfaces – Outdoor

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Condition of turf (pot-holes, mud, etc.)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Puddles drained off? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trash, glass, sharp objects, sharp-edged rocks, etc. on the field? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Obvious and hidden grates well-secured? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sufficient buffer zone between spectators? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Goal posts, goalie cages, baseball bases, etc. installed properly? |

Walls

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hanging ropes or electrical lines? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Moveable equipment flush or appropriately fastened to wall? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Protruding handles or cranks? |

Lighting

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All areas adequately lit? |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|

Equipment

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Personal equipment (i.e. clothing, footwear, protective equipment) appropriate to the sport? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Activity equipment (i.e. sticks, balls, goals, nets, bats, poles, whistles, cones, padding and mats) can meet the demands of the sport? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Athletes have removed jewelry? |

Emergency

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A first aid kit is available on site? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A copy of athletes' Application for Participation in Special Olympics Forms with emergency contacts, insurance and medical information is on site? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Telephones within easy access? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Vehicle within easy access? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Crisis Communication Section of Agency Manager Handbook? |

MOTOR ACTIVITIES TRAINING PROGRAM

The Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) provides comprehensive motor activity and recreation training for persons with the greatest physical need who do not yet possess the physical and/or behavioral skills necessary to participate in official Special Olympics sports. With emphasis on training and participation rather than competition, MATP is part of the commitment by Special Olympics to offer sports training opportunities to individuals with intellectual disabilities of all ability levels.

After five years of consultation with educators, physical therapists and recreation specialists, and after field-testing in the United States and several other countries, MATP was launched in 1989. A comprehensive MATP Guide has been developed to assist trainers.

How It Works

MATP trains participants in motor-based recreation activities and enables them to take part in a program which is appropriate to the age and ability of each individual. After a training period of at least eight weeks, participants may take part in a Special Olympics Training Day, giving each participant a chance to demonstrate his or her "personal best" in an activity and to be recognized for this accomplishment. The skills learned through MATP also enable people with severe disabilities to participate in community recreational activities with their non-disabled peers.

While the goal of MATP is not necessarily to prepare persons with severe disabilities to participate in sports, many MATP participants will gain the skills required to compete in certain Special Olympics sports.

MATP trains participants in seven basic motor skills designed to relate to specific sports. The skills also complement training by educators and therapists in daily living skills. MATP trains participants in:

- Mobility-Gymnastics
- Dexterity-Athletics
- Striking-Softball
- Kicking-Football
- Manual Wheelchair-Athletics
- Electric Wheelchair-Athletics
- Aquatics

MATP can be implemented through schools, group homes, residential facilities and other community-based settings. Training for volunteers is available through Special Olympics Motor Activities Training Schools. For more information, please contact SOWI.

MOTOR ACTIVITIES TRAINING PROGRAM (MATP) SANCTION FORM

This form must be completely filled out and submitted to the Program office at least eight weeks prior to the scheduled training day activity. Challenge award ribbons will be mailed out to MATP programs two weeks prior to the event.

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

MATP Coordinator: _____

Phone: Daytime: _____ Evening: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Agency: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Estimated number of MATP Special Olympics athletes participating: _____

Estimated coach-to-athlete ratio: _____

Training Dates: _____

Training Site: _____
(Location) (City)

Training Day Activity Site (if different): _____
(Location) (City)

**Special Olympics Wisconsin
2310 Crossroads Dr. Ste. 1000
Madison, WI 53718
Attn: Director of Training**

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