

2026 ATHLETE LEADERSHIP TRAINING SCHEDULE

In Special Olympics Athlete Leadership, we partner with athlete leaders to educate people about the abilities of our athletes, provide leadership and skills training to enable athletes to be successful and support them in leadership roles inside and outside of the movement.

Athlete Spokesperson – January TBD. *Hosted only for USA Games Delegation*



The role of an Athlete Spokesperson is to promote, educate, and inform others about the mission, benefits, and direction of Special Olympics. It goes beyond giving public speeches and interviews, it is about spreading the word about the Special Olympics movement through different outlets.

Athletes as Facilitators – January TBD. Invite Only*



Define facilitation and describe the value it brings to learning and practice three key facilitation skills that will help participants be heard and value

Athletes as Coaches – February TBD



The Athletes-As-Coaches (AAC) Program is designed to help train and certify Athletes to become coaches in the Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) system.

Athlete Health Messenger – February TBD



A Health Messenger is a Special Olympics athlete or unified partner who has been trained to serve as a health and wellness leader, educator, advocate and role model within their Special Olympics communities and the community at large. The Athlete Health Messenger workshop focuses on the Fit 5 Curriculum (hydration, nutrition and physical activity) and strong minds.

Introduction to Athlete and Understanding Leadership – February Tuesday/Thursday TBD 6:00pm – 8:00pm (virtual).

Introduction to Athlete Leadership

This course is an overview of what it means to be an athlete leader. It serves as a guide to help athletes make decisions about their future roles and training in athlete leadership using interactive exercises. This course should be taken prior to any other courses.

Understanding Leadership This module takes you through the next step of discovering who you are as a leader and recognizing the value you bring as you continue your leadership journey. It will cover the definition of leadership, behaviors of great leaders, and introduces six basic leadership skills that are incorporated throughout other modules. These skills are communication, decision-making, adaptability, relationship building, action focus, and continuous improvement. This course should be taken along with the Introduction Athlete Leadership course.

Special Olympics Wisconsin

6582 Ronald Reagan Ave. | Madison, WI 53704

Phone (608) 222-1324 | **Web** SpecialOlympicsWisconsin.org | **Email** info@specialolympicswisconsin.org

Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities.



Understanding Emotions – March 12th, Virtual



In this module, athletes learn the importance of recognizing and managing emotions to build and maintain good relationships.

Money Matters – April TBD. 10:00am – 2:30pm Bank of America



Join employees from Bank of America to learn personal money management skill including completing a personal budget.

Engaging with Others – May TBD



Athlete Leaders learn how to effectively interact with individuals and teams and influence others to follow their lead.

Athlete Leaders Reunion – June 5th, 2026, 5:00pm-7:00pm at UW-Whitewater Williams Center



All athletes who have attended an athlete leadership class in recent years are invited to come connect with other athlete leaders through food and fun!

Introduction to Athlete Leadership & Understanding Unified Leadership – June TBD Tuesday/Thursday 6:00pm – 8:00pm

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Understanding Leadership

This module takes you through the next step of discovering who you are as a leader and recognizing the value you bring as you continue your leadership journey. It will cover the definition of leadership, behaviors of great leaders, and introduces six basic leadership skills that are incorporated throughout other modules. These skills are communication, decision-making, adaptability, relationship building, action focus, and continuous improvement. This course should be taken along with the Introduction Athlete Leadership course.

Athlete Spokesperson – July TBD



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Fitness Captains – August TBD



Fitness Captains are athletes on a sports team who lead the team in activities related to fitness and a Healthy Lifestyle. Fitness Captains can use their leadership and communication skills to encourage and empower fellow athletes to be healthy and fit on all Special Olympics teams

Athletes as Coaches – August TBD



The Athletes-As-Coaches (AAC) Program is designed to help train and certify Athletes to become coaches in the Special Olympics Wisconsin (SOWI) system.

Managing Time – September TBD



This module explores the importance of effective time management through establishing goals, prioritizing, and organized planning.

Healthy Relationships – September TBD



These four sessions are designed to inform and empower self-advocates by equipping them with the tools to engage in healthy relationships and communicate about boundaries and safety. The four sessions cover topics such as Understanding and Setting Boundaries, what is Consent, My Body Belongs to Me and Pathway to Help. It is expected that an athlete signs up to attend all four sessions to be registered for the class.

Athletes as Facilitators – October TBD



Define facilitation and describe the value it brings to learning and practice three key facilitation skills that will help participants be heard and value

Athlete Health Messenger – October TBD



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Government Advocacy – November TBD



Learn how government impacts SOWI and why it is important for you to talk to lawmakers about SOWI. Learn how to meet your lawmaker and tell your story.

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GMT & Fundraising – November TBD



The purpose of the training course is to provide event leaders with the required knowledge that will allow them to take on leadership roles in the planning, promotion, and execution of Special Olympics events. We will have specific focus of serving on a Games Management Team (assist with the planning and coordination of SOWI sports competitions) or Fund-Raising Event Team (assist with the planning of the Truck Convoy, Polar Plunge and other signature events).

Introduction & Understanding – December TBD

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Understanding Leadership

This module takes you through the next step of discovering who you are as a leader and recognizing the value you bring as you continue your leadership journey. It will cover the definition of leadership, behaviors of great leaders, and introduces six basic leadership skills that are incorporated throughout other modules. These skills are communication, decision-making, adaptability, relationship building, action focus, and continuous improvement. This course should be taken along with the Introduction Athlete Leadership course.

Leading Discussions – December TBD



This module focuses on collecting input from peers and engaging in and leading conversations. Includes listening to feedback and summarizing them into themes and common ideas.

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