

# GENERAL ORIENTATION



# Special Olympics Mission

- ▣ To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people with intellectual disability, 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.

# Athlete Oath

- ▣ “Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

# You Need to Know...

- ▣ SOSC = Special Olympics South Carolina
- ▣ SOI = Special Olympics Incorporated
- ▣ SOSC has more than 22,000 athletes and conducts more than 400 sports competitions per year supported by 15,000 volunteers (900 volunteer coaches).

# 9 FACTS

## You Need to Know...

- ▣ SO is for children & adults with intellectual disabilities
- ▣ SO is free to athletes
- ▣ SO athletes participate as early as age 2
- ▣ SO is year-round
- ▣ SO is worldwide (more than 180 sanctioned programs)
- ▣ SOSOC offers 23 different sports (SOI, 26)
- ▣ SO offers individual as well as team sports
- ▣ SO stresses training as well as competition
- ▣ SO is sanctioned by International Olympic Committee

# You May Know...

- ▣ All SO competitions follow the Official SO Sports Rules, which have been adapted from official rules of the National Governing Body or International Federation of each sport offered by SO.
- ▣ SO offers various levels of competition based on ability levels.



# Official Summer Sports



- ▣ Aquatics
- ▣ Basketball
- ▣ Bowling
- ▣ **Cycling**
- ▣ Equestrian
- ▣ Football (soccer)
- ▣ Golf
- ▣ Gymnastics
- ▣ Powerlifting
- ▣ Roller Skating
- ▣ Softball
- ▣ Tennis
- ▣ Track & Field
- ▣ Volleyball

Not offered by Special Olympics South Carolina.

# Official Winter Sports

- ▣ Alpine Skiing
- ▣ **Cross Country Skiing**
- ▣ Figure Skating
- ▣ **Floor Hockey**
- ▣ **Snowboarding**
- ▣ **Speed Skating**



**Not offered by Special Olympics South Carolina.**



# Nationally Popular Sports

- ▣ Bocce
- ▣ Badminton
- ▣ Cheerleading
- ▣ Disc Golf
- ▣ Flag Football
- ▣ Kayaking
- ▣ Sailing
- ▣ Table Tennis
- ▣ **Team Handball**



Not offered by Special Olympics South Carolina.

# Beyond the Playing Field...

- ▣ Unified Sports
- ▣ Athlete Leadership Programs
- ▣ Motor Activities Training Program
- ▣ Healthy Athletes Programs
- ▣ Young Athletes Programs
- ▣ Project UNIFY
  - Be a fan.
  - End the R-Word/Spread the Word to End the Word

# Unified Sports

- ▣ Unified Sports is combining approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes with athletes without intellectual disabilities (called Unified Partners) on sports teams for training and competition.
- ▣ Unified Partners and SO Athletes should have similar sports skills.
- ▣ Unified Sports is offered in both individual (an athlete and unified partner paired together) and team sports.

# Unified Sports

- ▣ Aquatics
- ▣ Badminton
- ▣ Basketball
- ▣ Bocce
- ▣ Cheerleading
- ▣ Flag Football
- ▣ Golf
- ▣ Gymnastics
- ▣ Kayaking



- ▣ Sailing
- ▣ Soccer
- ▣ Softball
- ▣ Team Handball
- ▣ Tennis
- ▣ Track & Field
- ▣ Volleyball

# Athlete Leadership Programs

Athlete Leadership Programs is designed to offer positions in the organization for athletes who display leadership qualities. With training and support, athletes can become....

- ▣ Certified Coaches
- ▣ Certified Officials
- ▣ Board Members
- ▣ Global Messengers
- ▣ Event Volunteer



# Motor Activities Training Programs



Motor Activities Training Program is designed for athletes with severe motor limitations who do not possess the physical skills to participate in Special Olympics sports. They meet challenges that are designed for both mental and physical development.

# Healthy Athletes Programs



During Special Olympics competitions, athletes can receive a variety of health screenings and services in a series of clinics conducted by health care professionals. These professionals are specifically trained to meet the health needs of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- ▣ Fun Feet
- ▣ Fun Fitness
- ▣ Nutrition
- ▣ Opening Eyes
- ▣ Special Smiles
- ▣ Sun Safety

# Young Athletes Program

Young Athlete Program is for athletes 2-7 years old designed to prepare them for sports participation by increasing strength and coordination while developing group play.





# Project Unify

- ▣ Funded through the Federal Department of Education, Project Unify seeks to offer inclusive sports and social opportunities within the school setting.
- ▣ Using student led Youth Activation Councils and Ambassadors, students organize activities to showcase the abilities of Special Olympics athletes.
  - Spread the Word to End the Word Campaigns
  - Be a Fan campaigns



# Power in Partnerships

Special Olympics recognizes opportunities to partner with other organizations and groups to offer sports in a variety of ways and forums.

- ▣ School Systems
- ▣ Parks & Recreation
- ▣ Sports Organizations
- ▣ Other Nonprofits



# Fundraising

- ▣ Approximately 70% of SOSOC's funding comes from loyal individual donors. Other funding is secured via corporate sponsors, special events, and grants.
- ▣ The Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) helps to garner individual donations and holds special events through the efforts of officers and employees throughout the state.

# SO Get Into It

- ▣ This online resource includes lessons, activities, videos, athlete stories and supplemental materials teaching students K-12 how they can relate to and build relationships with our population.
- ▣ Activities are tied to service learning in a classroom or community setting as a part of a club or community based event.
- ▣ Includes involvement with local Special Olympics Programs whenever possible.

# 4 Essential Elements of Special Olympics Programs

- ▣ Coaches' Training
- ▣ Athletes' Training
- ▣ Divisioning & Competition
- ▣ Olympic-style  
Competition/Events

# Coaches' Education

- ❑ Special Olympics depends on its coaches to be well informed on not only the rules of the sport but also coaching techniques and impassioned in their delivery.
- ❑ We offer certification options in sports skills, tactics for coaching individuals with intellectual disabilities, and continuing education such as first aid courses.
- ❑ Once completed, we require 10 practicum hours and a recertification process of every 3 years to keep our coaches fresh and energized.



In deciding number of coaches per team, coaches are asked to follow a 4 athletes to 1 coach ratio. (4:1)

# Levels of Competition

- Every ability level is accommodated in Special Olympics in a variety of sports. For example:
  - Lowest Ability-
    - 25m assisted walk (Athletics), 15m flotation race (Aquatics), wheelchair events, MATP
  - Individual Skills (lower ability)
    - Adapted events for many Individual and Team sports such as Basketball, Golf, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, or Volleyball
  - Modified Team Events
    - 3-on-3 Basketball; 5-a-side Soccer; 9-hole alternate shot Golf Competition
  - Team Events
  - Unified Sports (highest ability)

# The Divisioning Process



- Divide by Gender:
  - Male, Female, or Combined (in some cases)
- Divide by Age:
  - Individual Sports: 8-11; 12-15; 16-21; 22 and over
  - Team Sports: 15 and under; 16-21; 21 and over; 30 and over
- Divide by Ability
  - Use pre-competition info and score
  - On-site preliminary events
  - Suggested- difference between best and worst scores should not vary by more than 15%
  - Giving each competitor in a division equal opportunity to excel



# The Divisioning Process



- ▣ Combining Groups
  - Age and/or gender groups may be combined if it achieves a closer matching of ability
  - Minimum # of athletes/teams in a division should be 3; maximum should be 8.

# Opening Ceremonies

- ▣ Should Include:
  - Parade of Athletes
  - Recitation of the SO Athlete Oath
  - Presentation of the Flame of Hope
- ▣ Can Include:
  - National Anthem/Pledge of Allegiance
  - Presentation of Colors
  - Speaker from the Community
  - Declaration of the Opening of Games by Guest of Honor
  - Live Entertainment



# Awards & Closing Ceremonies

Each competitor is awarded through ribbons on the local level to medals on the state, national, or international level. Places are awarded 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> with those who are disqualified receiving “Participant Ribbons”



State, national and international competitions are celebrated through Closing Ceremonies which acknowledges the accomplishments through short programs and a Victory Dance.

# SOSC Competition Opportunities...

## Summer Games

### *Columbia (May)*

- Aquatics
- Athletics
- Badminton
- Masters Bocce
- Bowling (under 21)
- Gymnastics
- Powerlifting
- Softball

## Fall Games

### *Greenville (October)*

- Bocce (under 21)
- Masters Bowling
- Disc Golf
- Golf
- Flag Football
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Volleyball

## One Day

### Tournaments

- Basketball (Columbia, April)
- Cheerleading (Columbia, May)
- Kayaking (Charleston, Aug.)
- Sailing (Charleston, June)
- Tennis (Columbia, March)

# Additional Competition Opportunities...

- ❑ **Regional Competitions** (Southeast Region; competitions in alpine skiing, powerlifting, sailing)
- ❑ **National Competitions** (Golf NIT, Unified Bowling, North America Tennis Championships)
- ❑ **National Games** (Every 4 years)
- ❑ **World Games** (Every 4 years rotating Winter Games and Summer Games on a two-year basis)



# Online Resources...

- ▣ [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)
- ▣ [www.so-sc.org](http://www.so-sc.org)