

## 2012 Special Olympics Style Guide – DRAFT

Using a consistent writing style and form in all Special Olympics communications enhances the clarity and professionalism of our materials. In general, Special Olympics follows the Associated Press Stylebook, one of the most widely used guides, along with Webster's New World College Dictionary (the dictionary recommended by AP).

Please note: The 2012 Special Olympics Style Guide is designed as a quick reference; it is not meant to be a glossary of every term or program. Instead, it focuses on some of the most commonly asked questions, explains correct usage, and points out where Special Olympics style diverges from AP style. If you have further questions, please ask a member of the Special Olympics Communications Department or email [kmckenna@specialolympics.org](mailto:kmckenna@specialolympics.org).

The draft Style Guide is followed by some basic guidance to avoid common errors, especially on the website (see p. 22). If you have any suggestions, please don't hesitate to send them.

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### **academic degrees**

Use only if requested or pertinent. Spell out degrees in text: use bachelor's degree, master's degree, etc. After someone's full name, use abbreviations: Ph.D., M.D.

### **ages**

Always use numbers. Examples: Special Olympics athletes can range in age from 8 to over 80. Young Athletes are 2 to 7 years old.

### **ALPs**

See Athlete Leadership Programs.

### **a.m., p.m.**

Lowercase with periods.

### **among, between**

Use among for more than two items, between for two items. Examples: The funds were divided among Tom, Dick and Harry. The argument was between Romulus and Remus.

### **articles (newspaper, magazine, etc.)**

Place the headlines/titles of newspaper, magazine and other publication articles in quotes. Do not italicize.

**athlete**

Lowercase in all uses.

**athlete oath**

“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.” On first mention, call it the Special Olympics athlete oath; thereafter, the oath. NOTE: This is not “the Special Olympics oath.”

**Athlete Leadership Programs**

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programs on first reference, ALPs thereafter (not ALP’s or ALPS).

**A Very Special Christmas®**

Title of ongoing series of holiday music compilation albums, CDs and DVDs benefiting the Christmas Record Grant Program. Spell out on first reference; AVSC thereafter.

**Be a fan®**

The ‘f’ is lowercase in the Special Olympics promotional campaign.

**Board of Directors, Special Olympics International Board of Directors**

Always capitalize. We refer to our Board as the Special Olympics International Board of Directors; on second reference, we refer to the Board of Directors. Someone can be called a Member or Director of the International Board of Directors, a Board Member, or a Member of the Board. Please do not say “Board Director.”

Example: Michelle Kwan, Director, Special Olympics International Board of Directors. Also: Bart Conner, Member of the Special Olympics International Board of Directors. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP Style.)

**book titles**

Place in quotes.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Do not hyphenate. Do not use ampersand.

**capital, capitol**

A capital is the city where a seat of government is located. A capitol is a government building, i.e., the U.S. Capitol.

**capitalization**

- Always capitalize Program when referring to Special Olympics Programs.  
Example: The Program held its first-ever competition in October 2000.
- When referring to activities and initiatives, only capitalize “program” when it is part of an official acronym. Example: Motor Activities Training Program.

- Capitalize an official title, whether it comes before or after the individual's name. (This is Special Olympics Style, not AP Style.)  
Examples: Special Olympics Chairman and CEO Timothy P. Shriver addressed the meeting. J. Brady Lum, President and Chief Operating Officer, delivered a videotaped message.

### **Celsius**

Use this term rather than centigrade for the temperature scale based on the metric system.

When giving a Celsius temperature, use these forms: 40 C or 40 degrees Celsius.

In Special Olympics documents, we generally express temperature using the Fahrenheit scale and provide the Celsius equivalent in parentheses.

Example: 77 F (25 C).

### **center, centre**

Both spellings are fine. This extends to other differences in British English/American English, including behavior/behaviour, program/programmes, honor/honour, etc.

### **chat room, chat page**

Two words, lowercase.

### **Christmas Record Grant Program (CRG)**

Capitalize Christmas Record Grant Program and Christmas Record Grants. In subsequent mentions, use CRG. Also: lowercase record grants.

### **Closing Ceremony**

Capitalize. Treat as singular. Examples: The Closing Ceremony starts at 5 p.m. Thousands of athletes plan to attend both Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

### **Coaches Education System**

Capitalize. Series of classes designed to educate Special Olympics coaches on how to best teach athletes. Coaches is plural, not possessive.

### **commas**

Use commas to separate elements in a complex series; do not use in a simple series.

Examples: The flag is red, white and blue. He'll nominate either Tom, Dick or Harry.

BUT: "... encourage relationships between schools and Programs, engage youth with and without disabilities, and build communities."

NOTE: Commas always go inside quotation marks. As in: "This is how it should look," she said. "Even if it's just part of a sentence," he added.

***(Also see punctuation entries for period, quotation marks and semicolon.)***

**company**

Spell out when used as part of a company name. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP style.) Example: Otis Elevator Company.

**Cops on Doughnut Shops®**

Over more than a decade, this partnership between Law Enforcement Torch Run® organizers and Krispy Kreme stores has raised funds and awareness for Special Olympics.

**corporation**

Spell out when used as part of a company name. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP style.) Example: Microsoft Corporation.

**currency**

For the benefit of our international audience, use US\$ when referring to American currency. Example: Special Olympics received a grant of US\$250,000.

**dates**

We follow the world's most widely used construction for dates – date-month-year: 22 September 2012. No comma. Months are spelled out. Also, please do not use a conversational form, as in September 22<sup>nd</sup> through September 24<sup>th</sup>. Correct form would be: 22-24 September. Also correct: The Winter Games are set for 29 January – 6 February 2013. (This is Special Olympics global style, contrary to AP style.)

**directions**

In general, lowercase north, south, northwest, northern, southern, etc., when they indicate compass direction. Capitalize when they designate regions, especially in the United States. Examples: He drove west, then along the southern coast. A storm system that developed in the Midwest is heading toward the East Coast.

**disabilities**

Use “people first” language: refer to a person with intellectual disability -- not a disabled person. Never use crippled, handicapped, or mentally disabled or retarded. If applicable, refer to a person who uses a wheelchair, not someone confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair-bound; or a person with autism, not suffering from autism.

NOTE: Generally use the plural “disabilities,” unless referring to one person, as in: an “individual with an intellectual disability.” For more than one person, it would be “children and adults with intellectual disabilities.” Not: “...children and adults with intellectual disability.”

**divisioning**

Lowercase. Special Olympics competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. This practice marks one of the fundamental differences between Special Olympics competitions and those of most other sports organizations.

**Down syndrome**

Not Downs syndrome or Downs Syndrome. The word syndrome is lowercase.

**e-mail**

Use the hyphen. Lowercase unless used at the start of a sentence.

**eyeglasses**

One word.

**Fahrenheit**

The temperature scale commonly used in the United States. When giving a Fahrenheit temperature, use these forms: 70 F or 70 degrees Fahrenheit. In Special Olympics documents, we generally express temperature using the Fahrenheit scale and provide the Celsius equivalent in parentheses. Example: 77 F (25 C).

**Family Support Network**

Use Special Olympics Family Support Network on first reference, Family Support Network thereafter.

**federal**

Generally lowercase. Capitalize only when it is part of a proper title.

Example: The federal building houses the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

**Fédération Internationale de Basketball Association (FIBA)**

The world governing body for basketball. Spell out on first reference; abbreviate thereafter.

**Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)**

The world governing body for football (soccer). Spell out on first reference; abbreviate thereafter.

**Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB)**

International governing body for the sport of volleyball. Spell out on first reference, then abbreviate.

**fewer, less**

In general, use fewer for individual items, less for bulk or quantity.

Examples: Fewer than 10 applicants called about the position. I had less than US\$10 in my pocket.

**field-test, field test**

When used as a verb or an adjective, hyphenate. When used as a noun, do not hyphenate.

### **Final Leg**

Capitalize, do not use quotes. A Final Leg consists of the last miles of a Law Enforcement Torch Run® in the days leading up to the Opening Ceremony of a Special Olympics competitive event. See Law Enforcement Torch Run.

### **Flame of Hope**

No quotes, no italics. The torch carried in the Law Enforcement Torch Run® and used to light the cauldron at Special Olympics Games.

### **fundraiser, fundraising**

Do not hyphenate.

### **Games**

Capitalize in all instances when referring to Special Olympics Games. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP style.) Treat as a collective plural rather than a collective singular expression. Example: The World Summer Games were held in Athens, Greece. NOT: “was held.”

**NOTE: When naming Games, put Special Olympics first whenever possible. The idea is for Special Olympics to stand out, rather than the year or location. Preferred: Special Olympics World Summer Games, Athens 2011. Not: 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games, Nagano, Japan.**

Summer Games and Winter Games may also be referred to chronologically. See below for guidance.

- **World Games**  
Capitalize. Designate the season in title of World Games, unless otherwise specified. After first reference, events may be referred to as World Games, the 2011 (or whichever year) Games, or the Games, *if* the meaning is clear within the context. See below list of past and upcoming World Games for full titles.
- **National Games**  
Capitalize. Always identify the program (as in U.S. National Games) as well as the season for Programs that hold Games for both summer and winter sports (e.g., Special Olympics Austria National Winter Games). For Programs that hold infrequent National Games, identify the event as National Games (e.g., Special Olympics Tanzania National Games-no mention of the season).
- **U.S. State Games**  
Capitalize. Identify the season for Programs that hold Games for both summer and winter sports (e.g., Special Olympics Maryland State Summer Games).
- **Local Games**  
Capitalize Games, lowercase local

- **Other**

Capitalize multinational or multistate events. Examples:

- Special Olympics Asia-Pacific Games
- Mid-Atlantic Invitational Golf Tournament
- Special Olympics European Games

### **Special Olympics World Summer and Winter Games**

*(Note the change from “International” to “World” in 1991.)*

#### **1968**

1st International Summer Games  
Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois, USA

#### **1970**

2<sup>nd</sup> International Special Olympics Summer Games  
Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois, USA

#### **1972**

3rd International Special Olympics Summer Games  
University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA

#### **1975**

4th International Special Olympics Summer Games  
Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, USA

#### **1977**

1st International Special Olympics Winter Games  
Steamboat Springs, Colorado, USA

#### **1979**

5th International Special Olympics Summer Games  
State University of New York at Brockport, Brockport, New York, USA

#### **1981**

2nd International Special Olympics Winter Games  
Stowe and the Village of Smugglers’ Notch, Vermont, USA

#### **1983**

6th International Special Olympics Summer Games  
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

#### **1985**

3rd International Special Olympics Winter Games  
Park City, Utah, US

#### **1987**

7th International Special Olympics Summer Games  
University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s College, South Bend, Indiana, USA

#### **1989**

4th International Special Olympics Winter Games  
Reno, Nevada, and Lake Tahoe, California, USA

**1991**

8th Special Olympics World Summer Games  
Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

**1993**

5th Special Olympics World Winter Games  
Salzburg and Schladming, Austria

**1995**

9th Special Olympics World Summer Games  
New Haven, Connecticut, USA

**1997**

6th Special Olympics World Winter Games  
Toronto and Collingwood, Ontario, Canada

**1999**

10th Special Olympics World Summer Games  
Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

**2001**

7th Special Olympics World Winter Games  
Anchorage, Alaska, USA

**2003**

11<sup>th</sup> Special Olympics World Summer Games  
Dublin, Ireland

**2005**

8th Special Olympics World Winter Games  
Nagano, Japan

**2007**

12<sup>th</sup> Special Olympics World Summer Games  
Shanghai, China

or

Special Olympics World Summer Games, Shanghai 2007

**2009**

9th Special Olympics World Winter Games  
Idaho, USA

or

Special Olympics World Winter Games, Idaho USA 2009

**2011**

13th Special Olympics World Summer Games  
Athens, Greece

or

Special Olympics World Summer Games, Athens 2011

**2013**

10th Special Olympics World Winter Games  
Pyeongchang, South Korea

or

Special Olympics World Winter Games, PyeongChang 2013



**2015**

14<sup>th</sup> Special Olympics World Summer Games

Los Angeles, USA

or

Special Olympics World Summer Games, Los Angeles 2015

*Additional note: some computer software programs automatically use a “superscript” for the ordinal -- as in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> -- while others do not (10th). Either way is fine.*

**Games Management Software**

Spell out and capitalize on first mention; abbreviate as GMS thereafter. Software used by Special Olympics for Games registration, divisioning and results.

**Games Organizing Committee**

On first mention, spell out and capitalize; also include a reference to the Games (2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games Organizing Committee, or Games Organizing Committee for the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games). Abbreviate as GOC thereafter. An organization formed to plan, organize, finance and conduct the Special Olympics World Games.

**geographic names**

Spell out names of all countries, states and cities. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) For U.S. state names, add USA afterwards.

Examples: The 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games were held in and around Boise, Idaho, USA. NOT: The 2010 USA National Games were held in Lincoln, NE.

Also, Special Olympics Rhode Island (USA) hosted a competition in the fall.

**Get Into It®**

Formerly known as SO Get Into It. A K-12 school curriculum developed by Special Olympics and distributed to educational institutions to encourage students to respect and embrace the differences and similarities in people with and without intellectual disabilities.

**Global Messengers**

Always capitalize. The term refers to Special Olympics athletes who have received training through the Sargent Shriver Global Messenger Program to become spokespeople for people with intellectual disabilities and to raise awareness of Special Olympics. Athletes who have been through that training anywhere in the world are referred to as Special Olympics [Program name] Global Messengers (as in, Special Olympics China Global Messengers). In addition, every few years, 12 athletes are chosen from Programs around the world to serve two- or four-year terms as spokespersons for the Special Olympics Movement; they are referred to as Special Olympics Sargent Shriver International Global Messengers.

**GMS**

See Games Management Software.

**GOC**

See Games Organizing Committee.

**good will, goodwill**

The noun is two words. The adjective is one word.

**grass roots**

Two words; hyphenate when used as an adjective.

**Guardians of the Flame®**

Capitalize, no quotes. Describes law enforcement officers participating who take part in a Torch Run, including a Final Leg. See Final Leg.

**Heads of Delegations**

Capitalize. After first reference, can be abbreviated as HOD. A World Games term referring to the heads of delegations that will be competing at the Games.

**Heads of Delegation Seminar**

Formerly called the Heads of Delegation Conference. Held one year prior to a World Games (and at the World Games location), the meetings offer an overview of World Games for Heads of Delegations.

**Healthy Athletes®**

Use Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® on first reference; Healthy Athletes thereafter. The Healthy Athletes name is an umbrella for seven disciplines:

- Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes® (vision)\*
- Special Olympics Special Smiles® (dental)
- Special Olympics Healthy Hearing (hearing)
- Special Olympics FUNFitness (physical therapy and nutritional advice)
- Special Olympics Health Promotion (general health and fitness)
- Special Olympics Fit Feet (podiatry)
- Special Olympics MedFest® (sports physical exam)

\*This is a partnership between Special Olympics and Lions Clubs International. Always use the full name as shown above on first reference; use Opening Eyes thereafter.

When mentioning any of the Healthy Athletes disciplines, include Special Olympics on first mention, as in: Special Olympics Special Smiles®.

**hemisphere**

Capitalize Western Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, etc. Lowercase in other uses.

**Host Town program**

This involves cities and towns surrounding a World Games location that volunteer to host Special Olympics athlete delegations for several days prior to the Games Opening Ceremony. The Host Town – or Host Towns -- program allows athletes to rest, acclimate and train prior to competing at World Games.

**intellectual disabilities**

As of 2004, this is the official term used by Special Olympics to refer to the population we serve. Use “people first” language: children and adults with intellectual disabilities, never mentally or intellectually disabled person, or person suffering from, afflicted with or a victim of intellectual disabilities. Use the singular term when referring to one person, e.g., “an individual with an intellectual disability,” and the plural when referring to more than one person, e.g., “adults and children with intellectual disabilities.” The term is synonymous with mental retardation.

**International Association of Chiefs of Police**

Abbreviate as IACP after first mention. The founding law enforcement organization of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics.

**Internet**

Capitalize.

**Korea**

The Special Olympics Program is located in Korea. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) However, when necessary, use South Korea to identify the country hosting the 2013 World Winter Games. Example: The 10th Special Olympics World Winter Games are being held in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

**Kosovo**

The official name is Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99. (UNSCR = UN Security Council Resolution). There is currently no abbreviation for Kosovo. Do not refer to it simply as Kosovo, unless on second reference.

**Law Enforcement Torch Run®**

Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics on first mention; use Law Enforcement Torch Run, Torch Run or LETR thereafter. The first use of the full title should include the registration symbol ® after the word “Run.” Law enforcement officers carry the Flame of Hope (torch) prior to a Special Olympics competition to raise funds for and awareness of the Special Olympics Movement worldwide. Officers involved in the Law Enforcement Torch Run are also called Guardians of the Flame. NOTE: law enforcement officer is lowercase, no hyphens. See also Final Leg, Flame of Hope.

**long-distance**

Hyphenate as a compound modifier. Examples: She has been training to be a long-distance runner. BUT: It’s a long distance to the beach.

**long jump**

As a noun, two words. As an adjective, hyphenate.

Examples: He competed in the long jump. She won a medal in the long-jump event.

**longtime**

One word as a compound modifier.

Examples: They are longtime supporters of Special Olympics. They've been friends a long time.

**Macedonia**

Refer to this country as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Abbreviate as FYR Macedonia. Do not just use Macedonia alone.

**magazines**

Place in quotes. Lowercase "magazine" unless it is part of the title of the publication; do not italicize the word "magazine." (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) Examples: "Harper's Magazine," "Newsweek" magazine.

**measurements**

All Special Olympics documents should include both metric and U.S. measuring systems.

- **foot**—the basic unit of length in the U.S. measuring system. The metric equivalent is exactly 30.48 centimeters, which may be rounded to 30 centimeters for most comparisons.
- **kilometer**—the metric term for 1,000 meters. A kilometer is equal to approximately 3,281 feet or five-eighths (0.62) of a mile
- **knot**—one nautical mile.
- **meter**—the basic unit of length in the metric system. It is defined as being equal to approximately 39.37 inches, which may be rounded off to 39.5 inches in most comparisons.

**mental retardation**

Do not use. This term has been eliminated from U.S. federal health, education and labor policy by the passage of Rosa's Law in 2010. It has been replaced with the term "intellectual disability." In descriptions, please use "people first" language, as in: an "individual with an intellectual disability" or children and adults with "intellectual disabilities."

**mid**

No hyphen unless followed by a number or a capital letter. Examples: midterm exam, mid-April, mid-1930s.

**millions, billions**

Use figures with million or billion. Example: Special Olympics serves more than 3.7 million athletes, or nearly 4 million athletes.

**Minister**

Capitalize before or after a person's name. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

Example: Yasmina Baddou, Minister of Health, Morocco.

**Ministry**

As a government entity, capitalize. Example: the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Education.

**Motor Activities Training Program**

Abbreviate as MATP after first mention. A program specially designed for individuals with such severe intellectual disabilities that they cannot benefit from standard Special Olympics training and competitive programs.

**movement**

Capitalize on first reference when referring to the global agenda and actions of Special Olympics, only when it directly follows the name Special Olympics. On second reference, use lowercase.

Examples: His speech marked a turning point in the Special Olympics Movement. She has been one of the greatest supporters of the movement.

**movies, musicals, operas**

Place in quotes.

**multi**

In general, no hyphen. Examples: multinational, multiregional, multistate.

**National Director**

Always capitalize. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

**National Games**

Always capitalize. See Games.

**the Netherlands**

The word “the” is lowercase.

Example: The 2000 Special Olympics European Games were held in Groningen, the Netherlands.

**nonprofit**

One word, no hyphen.

**numerals**

Spell out numbers one through nine, except for ages. Use figures for 10 and above.

Examples: Special Olympics has seven Regional offices. A delegation of 23 athletes is expected.

NOTE: Follow the same rule for most ordinals (first, second, third, etc.) UNLESS they’re used to form a name/title. Example: The 8th Special Olympics World Winter Games were held in Nagano, Japan.

**Olympic-type or Olympics-style sports**

Used to describe the more than 32 sports offered to Special Olympics athletes. Hyphenate.

**online**

One word.

**open water swimming**

Lowercase. No hyphen.

**Opening Ceremony**

Capitalize. Treat as singular. The Opening Ceremony was held at the University of Nebraska. Also note: Many volunteers worked at both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

**Palestinian Authority**

Not Palestine. However, the Special Olympics Program in the region is referred to as Special Olympics Palestine.

**Parade of Athletes**

Capitalize. The procession of athletes at the start of an Opening Ceremony.

**partner**

Not capitalized. Refers to half of a unified pair. Example: The Unity Sports tennis match included an athlete from Costa Rica and a partner from Turkey.

**percent**

One word. Use figures only, as in: 3 percent, 50 percent.

**Plane Pull®**

A Law Enforcement Torch Run® fundraiser. Capitalize.

**plays**

Place the title of a play in quotes; do not italicize.

**Polar Plunge®**

Or Polar Bear Plunge (without the registration mark). A U.S. Law Enforcement Torch Run® fundraiser. Capitalize.

**prefixes**

In general, do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant.

- Use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel (e.g., pre-existing)
- Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized (pre-Colombian).
- Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes (e.g., sub-subparagraph).

**Preliminary Games**

Capitalized. This term is preferred over Test Games, but either one is fine. May be shortened to Pre-Games. Example: The World Preliminary Games were held in Athens in late May 2010.

**President, the President**

Always capitalize. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

**Prime Minister, the Prime Minister**

Always capitalize. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

**Programs**

The word “Program” is always capitalized when referring to a Special Olympics Program to differentiate it from initiatives and activities.

Example: Special Olympics Australia’s National Games in April 2010 were one of the Program’s most successful ever.

- **National Programs**

Capitalize.

Example: Representatives of nine National Programs attended the seminar.

In National Program names, “Special Olympics” precedes the country name (Special Olympics Malawi, not Malawi Special Olympics).

- **State and Provincial Programs**

In state and provincial Program names, “Special Olympics” always precedes the state or province name.

Examples: Special Olympics Massachusetts, Special Olympics District of Columbia, Special Olympics Ontario.

The same rule applies to city Programs. Example: Special Olympics Toronto.

**Project UNIFY®**

Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is an education-based project that uses sports and education programs to develop school communities where all youth – with and without intellectual disabilities -- work together toward greater respect and dignity for people with intellectual disabilities.

**push-ups**

Hyphenate.

**quotation marks**

Please note that commas and periods always go inside quotation marks, even with sentence fragments. Example: We call this “an easy rule.” NOT: We call this “an easy rule”.

**®**

Registered trademark symbol is used only on first reference.

**R-word**

Note hyphen and capital “R.” Refers to the word "retard" or the word "retarded." Use of these terms can hurt millions of people with intellectual disabilities, their families and friends.

## **Regions (Special Olympics)**

With a capital “R.” Always use the full Special Olympics Region name on first reference, as in: Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia, not SOEE. Special Olympics is organized into seven Regions. The regional offices, staffed by Special Olympics employees, provide training and support to their area Programs.

- Special Olympics Africa
- Special Olympics Asia Pacific
- Special Olympics East Asia
- Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia
- Special Olympics Latin America
- Special Olympics Middle East/North Africa
- Special Olympics North America

## **Sargent Shriver International Global Messengers**

See Global Messengers.

## **School Enrichment Program**

Capitalize. A World Games initiative in which school children in the region where Games are being held are made aware of the Special Olympics Movement -- and how they can take part.

## **semicolon**

Use to separate complex information or lists beyond what a comma can convey; also to link independent clauses. If these clauses get too unwieldy, however, consider writing separate sentences.

## **Shriver family members involved in Special Olympics**

Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Founder (Mrs. Shriver or EKS on second reference)

Sargent Shriver, former President and Chairman of the Board

Timothy P. Shriver, Special Olympics Chairman and CEO\*

Maria Shriver, Member, International Board of Directors

Bobby Shriver, former Board Member, also producer of “A Very Special Christmas” record/CD/DVD series

***\*NOTE: When mentioning the Special Olympics Chairman and CEO in introductions, please use Dr. Timothy P. Shriver. For documents and formal correspondence, his signature is Timothy P. Shriver, Ph.D. For all else, including press releases and anything on the website, use Tim Shriver (plus his title).***

## **Soldier Field**

In Chicago, this is the site of the 1st International Special Olympics Summer Games in 1968 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Special Olympics Summer Games in 1970.



## **Special Olympics**

The official name of the global organization is Special Olympics, Inc. Generally, refer to the organization as Special Olympics (without the Inc.). Never refer to the organization as “the” Special Olympics, except as a compound adjective (the Special Olympics Movement). Never use Special Olympic. If possible, avoid the possessive (Special Olympics’) and never use Special Olympics’s. Also: Do not use the abbreviations SOI or SO in any public document, though informal use is accepted.

## **Special Olympics athlete oath**

See athlete oath.

## **Special Olympics athletes**

Not Special Olympians.

## **Special Olympics Team USA**

Always use Special Olympics Team USA, not just Team USA. (Team USA – without the words Special Olympics -- refers to the U.S. Olympic team.) Do not use periods in USA. Special Olympics Team USA is the U.S. delegation to a Special Olympics World Games.

## **sports**

Individual sports are not capitalized in text.

Examples: The tennis competitions are today; bocce starts tomorrow.

Athletes can compete in 32 sports, including official summer sports, official winter sports and recognized sports. Special Olympics also offers some demonstration sports.

- **Official summer sports:** Official sports are those that Special Olympics recognizes as being part of the movement’s sports training and competition.

aquatics (swimming)

athletics (track and field)

badminton

basketball

bocce

bowling

cycling

equestrian sports

football (soccer). NOTE: Soccer, in parentheses, appears after “football” at the first mention so that readers will not confuse the sport with American football.

golf

gymnastics (artistic and rhythmic)

handball

judo

powerlifting

roller skating  
sailing  
softball  
table tennis  
tennis  
volleyball

- **Official winter sports:** Official sports are those that Special Olympics recognizes as being part of the movement's sports training and competition.

alpine skiing  
cross-country skiing  
figure skating (Hyphenate only when used as a compound adjective, e.g., figure-skating venue)  
floor hockey (Hyphenate only when used as a compound adjective, e.g., floor-hockey stick)  
snowboarding  
short track speedskating (Hyphenate only when used as a compound adjective, e.g., the short-track speedskating competition)  
snowshoeing

- **Recognized sports:** Sports that are not classified by Special Olympics as official sports, but which Special Olympics authorizes for inclusion in its sports training and competition programs. These sports have participation in at least 12 accredited Programs and at least two regions.

cricket  
floorball

kayaking  
netball

- **Demonstration sports:** These are sports that take place only at a Games event. Examples include open water swimming, beach volleyball or floorball.
- **Locally popular sports:** Programs may offer sports – such as flag football -- that are locally popular but are not considered official or recognized sports.

## Sports Experience

Not Sport Experience. A Special Olympics Sports Experience brings people together in an engaging environment, allowing participants to experience the talents and personalities of Special Olympics athletes.

**Spread the Word to End the Word®**

Capitalized. The campaign for mutual respect and dignity that is spreading across the United States and around the globe, involving people of all ages – from high schools to college campuses and corporate offices. The goal of Spread the Word to End the Word is for people to think about the hurtful and disparaging uses of the word “retard” and pledge to stop using it.

**Strategic Plan**

Use Special Olympics Strategic Plan on first reference, Strategic Plan on second reference when referring to the organization’s vision and strategy for 2011-2015. Capitalize references to the plan framework, including Athlete Experience, as well as pillars that Advance Quality Sports and Competitions, Build Communities, Connect Fans & Funds, Define Movement Leadership and Establish Sustainable Capabilities.

**Team USA**

See Special Olympics Team USA.

**Technical Delegates**

May be abbreviated as TDs on second reference

**Tip-A-Cop®**

Capitalize (including the “A”) and use hyphens. A Law Enforcement Torch Run® fundraising event in which officers assist with waiting tables at a restaurant and collect “tip” donations for Special Olympics.

**T-shirt**

Capitalize the “T.”

**Titles**

Titles are capitalized when used before or after a name. No commas are needed if the name goes first. Examples: J. Brady Lum, President and Chief Operating Officer, will highlight the Strategic Plan. Special Olympics Chairman and CEO Tim Shriver is the featured speaker. NOT: Special Olympics Chairman and CEO, Tim Shriver, is the featured speaker.

**Torch Lighting Ceremony**

Always capitalize.

**Torch Run**

Use Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics on first reference. Law Enforcement Torch Run, Torch Run, or LETR thereafter.

**Toward**

Not towards.

**Train-the-Trainer**

Hyphenated and capitalized.

**UEFA**

Union des Associations Européennes de Football. The governing body of European football associations.

**Unified Sports<sup>®</sup>**

A program that brings together people with intellectual disabilities (athletes) and those without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition with an emphasis on meaningful participation for all. The Unified Sports experience allows all participants to develop sport skills, create long-lasting friendships and actively engage with their community. On first reference, refer to as Special Olympics Unified Sports<sup>®</sup>.

**Unity Sports**

Exhibition games that team people with and without intellectual disabilities on the field of play; these often involve celebrities. Unity Sports events create an opportunity to spotlight the importance of friendship, sportsmanship and inclusion.

**United States, U.S., USA**

Spell out when used as a noun. Use U.S. only as an adjective. Use USA after U.S. State Program names on first reference.

Examples: Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and the United States make up Special Olympics North America. Special Olympics Connecticut is a U.S. Program. Special Olympics Texas (USA) hosts its Fall Classic in October.

**Vice President**

Capitalize. Do not hyphenate.

**Washington, D.C.**

Include comma and periods.

**website**

One word, lowercase.

**World Wide Web, the Web**

Capitalize.

**yearlong**

One word. This is AP style, so we'll stick to it for now. (But note the two usages below.)

**year-end**

Hyphenated for both noun and adjective.

**year-round**

**Young Athletes™**

Athletes is plural. The program created to reach out to children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 to 7 and introduce them to the world of sport, with the goal of preparing them for Special Olympics training and competition.

## THE MOST COMMON STYLE ERRORS (and how to avoid them)

### \*WEB EDITION\*

*Below is guidance on avoiding some of the more frequent style errors. These can be especially important when writing copy that will be posted on the Special Olympics website ([www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)).*

#### HEADLINES

- Please Capitalize All Main Words. This includes more than just proper nouns. This include all verbs, even short one such as **Is** and **Are**; pronouns and possessives such as **Our** and **Its**; and short, but important words, such as **All**.
- Headlines Need Verbs. A label is not a headline, as in “2013 World Games.” Among other things, the verb in the headline helps tell what the story’s about – and whether it’s really a story.

#### DATES

Use the Date-Month-Year construction, as in 16 January 2012. This is the way dates are written in most places around the world: no abbreviations and no commas. (This is Special Olympics global style, not AP style.)

#### PUNCTUATION

##### PERIODS

- Periods go inside quotation marks. “No exceptions.”
- Leave one space after a period. Not two.

##### COMMAS

- Commas are used in a complex series, as in: “encouraging relationships between Programs and schools, engaging youth with and without disabilities, and building communities.”
- Commas are not needed in a simple series, such as “pride, joy and empowerment.”
- Commas always go inside quotation marks. “This is how it should look,” she said. “Even if the comma is part of an incomplete sentence,” he added.
- Don’t use commas to separate a title that goes directly in front of a name. Yes: Special Olympics Chairman and CEO Tim Shriver cheered the athletes. Not: Special Olympics Chairman and CEO, Tim Shriver, cheered the athletes.

## OTHER CAUTIONS

- Unified vs. Project UNIFY. Unified Sports brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities for training and competition. It should not be confused with Special Olympics Project UNIFY, the education-based program using sports and education initiatives to inspire and activate youth.
- Movement. The “m” is only uppercase when it follows Special Olympics, as in “The Special Olympics Movement.” Please try to avoid referring to “the Movement.”
- When writing a press release or other announcement that will “live” on our website for a while, avoid use of “today” when possible. Let the dateline (or the date on the web page) do that for you.

## FINAL NOTE

We are a global organization. When mentioning Special Olympics events, activities or athletes on the website, please don’t label these as SO North America or SO MENA or SO Latin America events or athletes, but rather simply as Special Olympics events or athletes. We are all part of one organization spanning seven regions. Our website should reflect this.