



## Article 1

### **Mission, Goal & Founding Principles**

The Mission Statement, Goal and Founding Principles of Special Olympics are outlined in this Article. Emanating from the mission, the ultimate goal of Special Olympics is to help persons with intellectual disabilities participate as productive and respected members of society at large, by offering them a fair opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills and talents through sports training and competition, and by increasing the public's awareness of their capabilities and needs. The Founding Principles support this goal by emphasizing that people with intellectual disabilities can enjoy, learn and benefit from participation in individual and team sports, underpinned by consistent training and by competition opportunities for all levels of ability. According to the Principles, Special Olympics must transcend all boundaries of race, gender, religion, national origin, geography, and political philosophy.

They also state that every person with an intellectual disability should have the opportunity to participate and be challenged to achieve their full potential, with the focus at community level to reach the greatest number of athletes, strengthen their families and create an environment of equality, respect and acceptance.

## Article 2

### **Special Olympics Athletes**

Article 2 provides that every person with an intellectual disability who is at least eight years of age is eligible to participate in Special Olympics, and that there is no maximum age limit for participation. It also highlights the Young Athletes program which introduces children from two to seven years old to the world of sport with the goal of preparing them for Special Olympics sports training and competition when they get older.

Participation in Special Olympics is open to all persons with intellectual disabilities who meet the age requirements of this Article, whether or not that person also has other mental or physical disabilities, so long as that person registers to participate.

The use of athletes' names and likenesses is also covered in this Article, which sets out a requirement for separate consents when an athlete's name or likeness will be used for the marketing or sale of commercial products or services, even when used to promote Special Olympics.

## Article 3

### **Sports Training and Competition**

Article 3 covers the objectives of Special Olympics training and competition, which promote Special Olympics as an athlete-centered Movement. The objectives include developing the physical, social, psychological, intellectual and spiritual qualities and capabilities of each athlete and promoting the spirit of sportsmanship and love of participation in sports for its own sake regardless of levels of ability or the results of a particular competition.



Emphasis is placed on encouraging athletes to reach their highest level of athletic achievement, increasing public awareness of the needs and capabilities of persons with intellectual disabilities, increasing public support for Special Olympics and encouraging parental, family and community support.

The Article sets out how Special Olympics aims to promote and reflect the values, standards and traditions embodied in the ancient and modern Olympics movement in all Special Olympics competitions, while broadening and enriching these traditions. It also outlines a prohibition on charging fees as a condition for admission to or participation in any Special Olympics event, activity or competition.

The general requirements for sports training and competition are covered in this Article, including qualifying, competition advancement and 'divisioning', which is the way each Special Olympics competition is structured so that every athlete/team in the division has a reasonable chance to excel during competition. The three general classes of Special Olympics sports are outlined: official sports, which divide into official summer and winter sports, recognized sports, which are authorized for inclusion in Special Olympics sports training and competition programs, and locally popular sports as defined in the Sports Rules. The Rules related to invitational Games and Tournaments, Unified Sports, MATP and volunteers are also covered in this Article.

## **Article 4**

### **SOI's Governance of Special Olympics**

Article 4 describes SOI's rights and responsibilities to ensure that all activities offered to persons with intellectual disabilities under the name of Special Olympics are organized, financed and conducted in accordance with international standards and in a manner that preserves the quality and reputation of Special Olympics and serves the best interests of persons with intellectual disabilities worldwide.

The Article sets out lines of communication within SOI and its decision-making reach and authority, including General Rules and other standards, such as the Sports Rules. It describes the role of the following Committees and Councils:

- International Advisory Committee
- Regional Leadership Councils
- Sports Rules Advisory Committee
- General Rules Advisory Committee
- Medical Advisory Committee
- Torch Run Executive Council

The Article describes SOI's exclusive responsibility and authority over the conduct of Regional and World Games and Tournaments and Demonstrations, its approval of Accredited Program activities, and its authority over broadcasting and recording matters and trademarks.

It also sets English as the 'official business language' to be used throughout the Special Olympics Movement.



## Article 5

### **Governance and Operation of Accredited Programs**

Article 5 outlines the requirements of Accredited Programs as these relate to structures and governance. These include a requirement for each Accredited Program to have a Board of Directors or Program Committee, comprised of at least one sports expert, one expert in the field of intellectual disabilities, one Special Olympics athlete trained on Board/Program Committee participation, and at least one close family relation of a Special Olympics athlete. The total length of service of any Board/Program Committee member is limited to a maximum of nine consecutive years.

Along with stipulating the names that may be used by Accredited Programs and a requirement to operate within their jurisdictional limitations, the Article highlights the expectation that each Accredited Program will seek to increase the number of athletes involved in Special Olympics and measure growth in a standard way. Prohibitions are set out in relation to the display of commercial messages on athletes' or coaches' uniforms at Games, on the limited use of National Flags and National Anthems at Games, and on the use of alcohol and tobacco products at Special Olympics competition venues.

The Article also contains governance requirements such as compliance with laws and voluntary standards, financial and insurance requirements, codes of conduct and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

## Article 6

### **Accreditation of Programs**

Article 6 describes SOI's authority to grant Accreditation, which is a way of assuring that core quality and growth requirements of the Special Olympics mission, and also minimum management and financial standards, are met by Accredited Programs. It describes the rights afforded Accredited Programs and their obligations, the period of duration of Accreditation, and SOI's power to impose sanctions for violation of obligations, including revoking or denying Accreditation.

The procedures, timing and effect of revocation or denial are all outlined as are the procedures relating to waivers for non-compliance with Accreditation standards, which may be permitted in certain circumstances.

## Article 7

### **Fundraising & Development**

Article 7 establishes that each Accredited Program is solely responsible for raising the funds needed to pay for its own program and administrative operations, and limits a Program's fundraising rights to within its own jurisdiction. SOI is responsible for raising the funds needed for SOI's programs and administrative operations, and for supporting the growth of existing Accredited Programs as well as the worldwide expansion of Special Olympics. The Article highlights SOI's exclusive authority to conduct or approve a broad range of fundraising activities, including those which are conducted on a worldwide, regional, or multi-jurisdictional basis, such as World and Regional Games.



Accredited Programs and Games Organizing Committees (GOCs) have rights to fundraise for their own purposes, provided they cooperate with SOI and comply with standards and policies. In addition to stipulating these obligations, the Article outlines sponsor recognition requirements.

Accredited Programs have fundraising reporting obligations to SOI, and these are set out in this Article along with Programs' role in protecting Special Olympics trademarks and other intellectual property. It also outlines the consent required from SOI before separate entities for fundraising may be formed.

In accordance with the Article, SOI has exclusive authority to enter into worldwide agreements with corporate sponsors, although these rights may be extended by SOI to GOCs. SOI also has exclusive authority to make arrangements for or approve in advance any multi-jurisdictional fundraising activities.

## **Article 8**

### **Financial arrangements, Fiscal accountability, Insurance**

Article 8 outlines the standards for financial management that GOCs and Accredited Programs must comply with. It describes the requirements of Accredited Programs to develop an annual plan and budget, use separate bank accounts for Special Olympics activities, develop and maintain accurate financial statements, manage the financial affairs of its sub-Programs, meet audit requirements, provide reports and pay accreditation fees to SOI.

## **Articles 9 &10**

**Articles 9 and 10** provide guidance on how to interpret the General Rules and on the meanings and definitions of key words and phrases in the General Rules.