

## Coaching Education Vital

Because coaches are so influential in the development of Special Olympics athletes, **Special Olympics North America (SONA)** places great emphasis on coaching education and training. Special Olympics coaches must be certified within four years by taking the **General Orientation** (one time) and either the **Skills Courses** or **Coaching**

**Special Olympics Athletes Course**. If you're a coach who needs to maintain or upgrade your certification, you'll find information on approved Special Olympics courses within this brochure. In addition, we are excited by the new online courses offered through the **American Sport Education Program (ASEP)** that satisfy re-certification requirements. Coaches play an indispensable role in Special Olympics, and coaching education helps to ensure each coach and athlete has the best sport experience possible.

### General Orientation

This basic introduction to Special Olympics covers the organization's mission and philosophy, organizational history and structure, intellectual disabilities and eligibility, and sports opportunities, initiatives, and rules. The **General Orientation** is necessary for all interested in working with Special Olympics athletes.

- Special Olympics mission and philosophy
- Organizational history and structure
- Mental retardation, eligibility, and rules
- Athlete protective behavior

### Skills Course and Motor Activities Training Program

The **Skills Course** is offered in each of the sports and focuses on the basic skills and strategies of the sport. It provides an application of the Special Olympics mission and philosophy in a sport-specific way. The **Skills Course** includes a classroom session, an activity session performing the skills with the lead trainers, and a model training session with athletes.

- Basic sport skills and strategies
- Special Olympics philosophy and practicum plans
- Fundamental skills development
- Competition and game understanding

The **Motor Activities Training Program (MATP)** is designed for persons with the most severe intellectual and/or physical limitations. These individuals do not yet possess the physical and/or behavioral skills necessary to participate in Official Special Olympics sports and are not able to follow objective and universal sports rules. The program emphasizes training and demonstrating one's personal best, rather than competition against others.



## Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course

This course is designed for the new coach with sport experience and the veteran Special Olympics coach looking to improve his or her training and coaching skills. The course involves four sections: the athlete, the coach, training and coaching each athlete, and successfully preparing for competition.

- Intellectual disabilities—mental, psychological, and social considerations
- Expanding the role as a Special Olympics coach
- Improving athlete performance and behavior through positive coaching techniques

### Unified Sports® Course

Special Olympics Unified Sports is a program that combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition. Age and ability matching of athletes and partners is specifically defined on a sport-by-sport basis. Unified Sports enables athletes to achieve the following:

- Develop higher-level sport skills
- Experience meaningful inclusion
- Socialize with peers and form friendships
- Participate in their communities

### Principles of Coaching Course

This course is non-sport specific and seeks to expand more of the sport sciences. It addresses the basic principles of coaching, coaching philosophy, planning and coaching administration, fitness and conditioning, and safety and risk management.

- Expanding the sport sciences
- Planning and administration
- Sports psychology
- Physical preparation and nutrition

### Tactics Course

This sport-specific course focuses on development of higher-level sport skills, game or event tactics and strategies, expanded skill instruction, and enhancing athlete performance.

- Sport strategies and tactics
- Advanced training principles
- Competition tactics and strategies
- Enhancing athlete performance

### Comprehensive Mentoring

In this course, the coach works with and is mentored by an experienced coach in Special Olympics and/or in the mainstream. The coach participates in a variety of opportunities such as staff briefings, practice sessions, weight training sessions, and competitions.

- Sport mentoring assistance
- Work with experienced coaches
- Comprehensive standards
- Other Special Olympics headquarters-approved coaching courses