A Handbook for Athlete Leaders

Athlete Leadership University Curriculum

2016

**Foundation**

**The Mission of Special Olympics**

To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

# Goal of Special Olympics

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.

**Value Statement of Athlete Leadership**

Special Olympics empowers athletes to be contributing and respected members of Special Olympics and society. We support athlete-leaders on and off the playing field.

**Purpose of Athlete Leadership**

The purpose of Athlete Leadership is empowering athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices and abilities to undertake meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement and create inclusive communities around the world.

**Definition of Athlete Leadership**

Through organized training and practical experiences, Athlete Leadership prepares athletes to undertake meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the Special Olympics organization, both on and off the playing field.

**Basic Concepts of Athlete Leadership:**

1. Athlete leadership is fundamental to Special Olympics being an athlete-centered organization.
2. Every Special Olympics athlete has leadership abilities that can contribute to the movement.
3. Athlete leadership starts with an athlete making an informed choice of leadership role(s).
4. Athlete leadership has a powerful effect on athletes’ self-esteem and self-confidence.
5. Athletes require education in leadership skills before being placed in positions of responsibility.
6. Athlete Leadership includes courses that guide athletes toward a variety of roles, including: board/committee membership, games management, public speaking, coaching, officiating, and youth leadership.
7. After attending courses, athletes need both immediate and real opportunities to practice newly-learned leadership skills.
8. Most athletes benefit from the support of a committed athlete-centered mentor whose role evolves as the athlete leader becomes more capable in their leadership role.
9. Special Olympics staff, volunteers and families must be educated to ensure they value and support the involvement of athletes in meaningful roles.
10. Skills learned in Athlete Leadership Programs enrich athletes' abilities to become more involved and respected in the community.

# Milestones

# The First Purpose Statement for Athlete Leadership

To empower athletes in developing leadership skills and utilizing their voices to assume meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement, and educate communities around the world that results in positive life changes.

*– Athlete Leadership Summit, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, March 2011*

# Redefining the Purpose of Athlete Leadership

The purpose of Athlete Leadership is empowering athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices and abilities to undertake meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement and create inclusive communities around the world.

*– Athlete Leadership Summit, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 2013*

**Roles for Athletes**

**Input Council Member**

You can improve your local program by making suggestions and discussing problems. Find out if your local program or area has an Input Council and become a participating member!

YOUR INPUT IS VALUABLE AND IS NEEDED!

**Athletes as Global Messengers**

Do you like to talk? You can be trained by Special Olympics in presentation skills to become an expert speaker. We’ll even teach you to use PowerPoint to give presentations to schools, community groups, parents, churches.

GIVE A TALK & GET NEW PEOPLE INVOLVED IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS!

**Athletes as Coaches**

You can become a coach or assistant coach if that is your dream! You will need to make a commitment to attend certification training by the Program office then apply your training. There are many Special Olympics athletes who have become coaches.

BECOME A COACH IF THAT IS YOUR DREAM!

**Athletes as Officials**

You can become an official if that is your dream! Special Olympics will provide athletes information so they can participate in sport National Governing Body certification programs as an official or other skilled sport personnel. Athletes who have become certified officials have served in that capacity at Local, State, Provincial, National, Regional and World Games.

BECOME AN OFFICIAL IF THAT IS YOUR DREAM!

**Athletes on Subprogram and Program Committees or Boards of Directors**

You can become a representative of athletes on these very important groups. Training is provided to prepare athletes to participate in Special Olympics programming and policy meetings. Training focuses on awareness and listening skills and reading financial reports. Many Programs have had several athletes on its Board of Directors and others have held key leadership positions in the state.

BECOME A COMMITTEE MEMBER; MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS!

**Athletes Working with the Media**

You can get the Special Olympics WORD out. You can write articles, do television or radio shows, or work with the newspapers. Some Special Olympics athletes have even produced and hosted their own TV show on cable.

JOIN US AND HELP GET THE WORD OUT TO EVERYONE!

**Athletes on Management and Sports Development Teams**

You can be a valuable asset on a Special Olympics Games or Sport Development Management Team. Some athletes are filling important roles by helping the Program/Subprogram conduct the Games that you compete in.

ASK YOUR PROGRAM WHAT YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE SPECIAL OLYMPICS COMPETITION!

**Athletes as Special Olympics Employees**

Someday you might be employed by Special Olympics. Several states and the national office have athletes on their payroll as regular employees.

WORK AT GETTING THE SKILLS YOU NEED TO BECOME AN EMPLOYEE!

**Athlete Congress Member**

The Congress exists in several states and national programs and there’s a World Congress. It provides a formal, deliberative process and place for athlete input on programming, policy and other processes of Special Olympics. There have been a total of three World Congresses. Programs offer a Congress Prep Course for those selected to attend the Congress. This ensures the right athletes are able to do all the tasks necessary to have a successful Congress.

BE AN ACTIVE INPUT COUNCIL MEMBER TO BECOME ELIGIBLE TO SERVE IN AN ATHLETE CONGRESS!

**Athletes as Volunteers or Donors**

Some of you have already done this maybe without realizing it. You’ve may have helped with bake/candy sales in the past. Perhaps you helped chaperone other athletes for a little while. Many of you have done these leadership roles for Special Olympics when you are not competing.

YOU WILL FIND NEW WAYS TO HELP YOUR PROGRAM EVERYDAY!

**Athletes as Mentors or Advocates**

You can help fellow athlete leaders by being their Mentor for Governance, at Athlete Leadership University or advocating for their rights when they are having sports or leadership problems.

 NOTHING FEELS BETTER THAN HELPING YOUR FELLOW ATHLETES!

**Athlete Leadership University Curriculum**

**Your Program’s Athlete Leadership Stage of Development**

If your Program is just starting or re-energizing its Athlete Leadership efforts and is unsure of what course(s) to offer, start with the basic core courses of the Athlete Leadership Training Series. Currently, there are three areas of focus – communication, sports and governance with health and wellness in the process of being developed. Every course requires a completed practicum before the athlete receives a certificate for that course. The most important action is to begin to offer athlete leadership training based on athlete interest.

**History and Athlete Leadership Development**

Special Olympics has provided training in athlete leadership since 1986 with the Athlete for Outreach Course which is now called Sargent Shriver Global Messenger Program. The program was expanded in 2002 to include additional courses beyond that of the Sargent Shriver Global Messenger Program. Many Special Olympics athletes now have a variety of educational opportunities that include communication, sports and governance leadership topics and Athlete Congress (if applicable).

**Eligibility**

Athletes who sign up for Athlete Leadership University must be at least 16 years old and previously or currently actively involved in Special Olympics. **Each athlete** must be accompanied by **a mentor** (volunteer), who works with the athlete during each course and locally during the required practical experience.

**Continuing Education**

Athlete leaders are encouraged to repeat courses on a periodic basis to update their leadership knowledge and skills. Course content changes over the years as new concepts are introduced.

**Additional Procedures**

To receive credit for a course, an athlete and his/her mentor must attend the course followed by practical experiences related to the course conducted in their local or regional program. Parents can serve as mentors or speech coaches to their son or daughter on a trial basis. A mentor should commit to working with his/her athlete for a minimum of two years. An athlete should commit to a **minimum of two years** participation after the initial Introduction to Athlete Leadership Course.

**Practicum**

A completed practicum form must be received within 6-12 months of taking a course with the exception of Athletes as Officials or Athletes as Coaches as the sport training may not be offered in a timely manner.

**Athletes Enrolled Follow Special Olympics Eligibility Guidelines**

**Identifying Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**

A person is considered to have an intellectual disability for purposes of determining his or her eligibility to participate in Special Olympics if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements:

1. The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability as determined by their localities; or
2. The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligent quotient or “IQ” testing or other measures that are generally accepted within the professional community in that Accredited Program’s nation as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay; or
3. The person has a closely related developmental disability. A “closely related developmental disability” means having functional limitations in both general learning (such as IQ) and in adaptive skills (such as in recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care). However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral, or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes, but may be eligible to volunteer for Special Olympics

For example, such volunteers could be partners in Unified Sports if they otherwise meet the separate eligibility requirements for participation in Unified Sports that are set forth in the SOI Sports Rules.

**Preserving Flexibility in Identifying Eligible Athletes**

An Accredited Program may request limited permission from SOI to depart from the eligibility requirements identified above if the Accredited Program believes that there are exceptional circumstances that warrant such a departure, and so notifies SOI in writing. SOI will consider such requests promptly, but shall have the final authority in determining whether any departure or exception is appropriate.

**Athlete Leadership University Curriculum Model**

# The Goal of Athlete Leadership University

Athlete Leadership University provides leadership training with a focus on three majors – communication, sports and governance for Special Olympics athletes who want to serve in meaningful leadership roles. Athlete Leadership University is dedicated to helping athletes become fully integrated and a meaningful part of the organization at every level. It brings together accomplished athletes in an atmosphere of sharing, knowledge and respect. *– Special Olympics Indiana, September 2013*

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**Athlete Leadership University Pre-requisites, Practicum & Credit**

This program uses a university model or slate of courses, where athletes may receive credit for attending courses and completing practical experience requirements in a focused area or major. If the University model is used, athletes can earn degrees in Communication, Governance, and Sports.

**First Course**

The first course that must be taken by all Athlete Leadership University students is “**Introduction to Athlete Leadership**” (INTRO). The “This is Athlete Leadership” is a 60-minute awareness and educational non-degree orientation, which gives a higher level of detail than ***Beyond the Vision***. This presentation is as dynamic in a large group setting as it is in a small group. Itwill also motivate staff, local program volunteers and athletes to become more involved. While it is NOT part of the normal curriculum, it is a basic, quick presentation to Athlete Leadership and the various Programs offered.

**Practicum for Credit in a Course**

Each course requires that a practicum be completed in order to get credit for the course. The practicum certification needs to be sent to Program office within 6-12 months of taking the course. Leeway is given for the “Athletes as Coaches” or the “Athletes as Officials” courses if the sport is out of season and training has not been offered. Note: The practicum for the Technology courses is monitored and tracked by the Technology instructors. They will inform SO Program office when an athlete completes the practicum. Nothing is required from the Athlete Leadership Coordinator for these courses.

**Pre-requisites for Advanced-level**

Some courses have pre-requisites. Note: An athlete cannot take a second course unless he/she first takes the INTRO course and receives credit.

**Other pre-requisites:**

* Courses in a student’s major plus practicums – before Leadership/Independent Study.
* Governance courses should be taken in order.
* Global Messenger courses must be taken in order.
* Preferred Coaching Special Olympics Athletes be taken after the Athletes as Coaches or Officials Courses.

**Order of Taking Courses**

Courses may be taken in any order from the curriculum chart (with the exception of those with prerequisites above). Students may take courses outside their major.

**Earning additional degrees**

Once an athlete leader completes his or her first degree, he/she may wish to earn additional degrees. He/she does not have to retake a course from the new degree curriculum if he/she already has credit for that course from a prior degree. Completing and receiving credit for the additional leadership course unique to the additional degree curriculum is required.

**Common Courses to All Majors in the Athlete Leadership University Curriculum**

**Course Requirements for All Majors**

* Introduction to Athlete Leadership (this MUST be the FIRST course)
* Courses specific to your major such as Technology or PowerPoint
* Leadership/Independent Study (this MUST be the LAST course before graduation)

**Introduction to Athlete Leadership**

**Curriculum:**  The curriculum includes the history of Athlete Leadership; an overview of Athlete Leadership and basic definitions; the role of the mentor; the leadership roles available; potential road blocks and barriers; Athlete Input Councils; and the development of each athlete’s personal purpose statement of what he or she wants to do as an Athlete Leader.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills and knowledge necessary to begin to be athlete leaders. The development of their purpose statement by revealing what they think their own strengths and likes are will point them into the role they want to fill and declare the major they want to pursue in Athlete Leadership University.

**Leadership/Independent Study**

**Curriculum:** Focuses on the difference between effective and enduring leaders through value-based leadership skills.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to plan two SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Track-able) goals, make a strategic planning worksheet, track progress on goals and identify a mentor to help with the process.

**Athlete Leadership University Curriculum Overview**

The **Athlete Leadership University Curriculum** can be seen and experienced through coursework taken in a focused area or major. The goal of the University model is to provide programming that mirrors a college degree with a major in Communications, Sports or Governance with Health in the process of being developed. Each course has a PowerPoint and Notes pages, Trainer Guide and Participant Guide as well as complementary materials and handouts. It is recommended that at least one of the trainers be an athlete with a defined role and subject matter and who has been trained in that role.

Athlete Leadership begins with awareness and promotion of the program. *Beyond the Vision* and *This is Athlete Leadership* are two such courses getting the word out and providing the participants information on Athlete Leadership and which Athlete Leadership Courses will be offered.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Promoting Athlete Leadership**   1. Beyond the Vision – Persuasive Presentation and Video *(20 minutes)* 2. This Is Athlete Leadership – Educational Orientation *(1 hour)* | | | |
| Introduction to Athlete Leadership Course *(7-8 hours: Pre-requisite before other courses)* | | | |
| ***Communications Major*** | ***Sports Major*** | | ***Governance Major*** |
| Global Messenger  Course | Athletes as Coaches Course | Athletes as Officials Course | Committees & Input Councils Course |
| Email, Internet and Search Engines Course | | | |
| Working with the Media  Course\* | Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course\*\* | | Experiencing Input Councils Course\* |
| PowerPoint  Course | PowerPoint  Course |
| Social Media Course\* *(Elective)* | | | |
| Advanced Global Messenger  Course\* | Sport-Specific Skills Course\*\* | Sport-Specific Officiating Course\*\* | Developing Athletes as Board Members Course\* *(Elective)* |
| Leadership/Independent Study *(Requirement for graduating from each major) or*  NGB Officiating Course for Officials Seeking NGB Certification | | | |
| **Introduction to Athlete Leadership** is the required first course, and **Leadership/ Independent Study**is the final course. Courses in the athlete’s area of concentration require participation in the course and completion of a practicum within 6-12 months. A new ***Health Major*** plus the **starred** (\*) courses are in development.  The **doubled starred** (**\*\***) courses are to be taught by sport qualified and Special Olympics experienced instructors. | | | |

**Communications Major**

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**Course Requirements**

* Introduction to Athlete Leadership
* Global Messenger
* Email, Internet and Search Engines [Technology]
* Working with the Media
* PowerPoint
* Social Media *(Elective)*
* Advanced Global Messenger
* Leadership/Independent Study

**Global Messenger Course**

**Curriculum:** Basic facts about Special Olympics and Special Olympics Program; Special Olympics Mission Statement; how to write a speech and what parts to include in a speech, learning to speak from the heart and from your notes. Making your statement of what does Special Olympics Mean to Me. Give a 2-3 minute speech about yourself and give speeches to target audiences that are 3-5 minutes long.

**Practicum:** Deliver 8 speeches to internal audiences within 8- 12 months. Send copy to state/national Athlete Leadership Coordinator.

**Email, Internet and Search Engines Course [Technology]**

**Curriculum:** How to use e-mail, search engines and the internet.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to use e-mail and the internet to become better communicators and athlete leaders.

**Practicum:** set up personal email on Gmail and have 10 athletes in address book. Show proof of regular emailing for 6-months after course ends in addition to a project assigned by instructor.

**Working with the Media** **Course** (being developed)

**Curriculum:** Understand types of media and how to interact with each one. Understand the difference between a sound bite and an interview. Know how to prepare for different types of media experience and role play radio and TV interviews and PSA’s. Athlete will be able to complete a I-minute radio interview and a 3 minute TV interview.

**Overall Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to give a short speech and answer questions from the audience about Special Olympics; offer ideas on different audiences that would be interested in hearing an athlete speak about Special Olympics. Speak with print and electronic media in a fashion that will enable reporters, editors, directors to share the Special Olympics story with its customer.

**Practicum:** Seek out and complete: 2 radio interview, 1 print interview and 2 TV interviews on cable, Public Service or network television. Within 8 months of taking class.

**PowerPoint Course**

**Curriculum:** Microsoft PowerPoint use and practice in completing a presentation.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to make PowerPoint presentations on their own in their roles of Global Messengers or Governance members.

**Practicum:** Make a 25-slide Athlete Leadership presentation for County Management team member, school, and group home. Presentation and feedback form submitted within six-twelve months of taking course.

**Social Media Course** (*Elective* - being developed)

**Curriculum:** Computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to understand, create and maintain a Facebook page as well as posts via blog, Instant Message, Twitter, etc.

**Practicum:** Create a Facebook page for your local Program and/or as an individual. Send 6 posts that are shared and 6 posts that are individual via social media. 6 of the 12 must include pictures. 1 of the posts must include a video.

**Advanced Global Messenger Course** (being developed)

**Curriculum:** Ideas on opportunities for giving speeches and making contacts; learning target marketing and their selling points, learning how to introduce someone work with a mentor who offers support in arranging speaking opportunities. Give a 5 minute speech to a specific target market using selling points, inflection and expression.

**Practicum:** Deliver 8 speeches to a minimum of 3 target markets to external organizations agencies etc. within 8-12 months and send copy to state/provincial/national Athlete Leadership Coordinator.

**Practical Experience Examples**

* **Sub-program Level:** Speeches to prospective athletes, schools, service clubs, management team; emceeing event, speaking at Games and Management Team meetings
* **State/Provincial/National:** Speaking to the Board of Directors, at Games, to prospective donors at events
* **International:** Applying to become an International Global Messenger after many speeches have been given effectively

**Governance Major**

**Course Requirements**

* Introduction to Athlete Leadership
* Committees and Athlete Input Council
* Email, Internet and Search Engines
* Experiencing Input Councils
* PowerPoint
* Social Media *(Elective)*
* Developing Athletes as Board Members *(Elective)*
* Leadership/Independent Study

**Committees and Athlete Input Councils Course**

**Curriculum:** Governance definition; basic understanding of committee work and Athlete Input Councils and the difference between them; participate in committee and Input Councils meetings. Learn the roles of mentor and facilitator. Learn how to set-up an Athlete Input Council in your local area.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the additional skills necessary to establish and conduct Athlete Input Councils at local, area, and state/provincial levels.

**Email, Internet and Search Engines Course**

**Curriculum:** How to use e-mail, internet and search engines.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to use e-mail and the internet to become better communicators and athlete leaders.

**Practicum**: set up personal email on Gmail and have 10 athletes in address book. Show proof of other measurement in practicum requirements.

**Experiencing Athlete Input Councils Course**

**Curriculum:** Provide athletes with numerous topics to choose from. Each athlete rotates as a chair one time and serves as a member providing feedback to committee members. There will be at least 6-8 opportunities /Input meetings with 6-8 different topics. There is no mentor/helper participation in this course. Athletes are expected to interact among themselves.

**Goals:** To get practical experience leading an Input Council meeting and being a member giving and taking feedback during the meeting.  Practice is the main objective.

**PowerPoint Course**

**Curriculum:** Microsoft PowerPoint use and practice in completing a presentation.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to make PowerPoint presentations on their own in their roles of Global Messengers or Governance members.

**Practicum:** Make a 25-slide presentation about a Governance topic to the Input Council, Local Program Management team members. Possible topics: How committee work; why athlete input is necessary or why local program management should have athletes involved.

**Social Media Course** (*Elective* - being developed)

**Curriculum:** Computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to understand, create and maintain a Facebook page as well as posts via blog, Instant Message, Twitter, etc.

**Practicum:** Create a Facebook page for your local Program and/or as an individual. Send 6 posts that are shared and 6 posts that are individual via social media. 6 of the 12 must include pictures. 1 of the posts must include a video.

**Developing Athletes as Board Members** (*Elective* – not yet designed)

**Curriculum:** As athletes they have learned to use their voices and give and receive feedback from their peers; they are ready to embark on the biggest challenge in Governance, that of a Board Member. This training will help them understand the role of a board member, confidentiality, developing policy, reviewing financial reports and committee reports along with parliamentary procedures. The athletes will learn to speak with an athlete voice on both financial and programmatic resources should be spent.

**Goal:** To prepare an athlete to serve on a board of directors

**Practicum**: Attend three board committee or ad hoc committee meetings (Finance Development; PR); Interview current athlete Board member and make a list of 3 most difficult tasks as a board member and the 3 tasks most enjoyed. Interview one current Special Olympics Board member and ask them to give you the three most important tasks that an athlete on the board of directors can do. Attend one Special Olympics Board meeting, Computer terminology, antivirus and spyware software, and photo/video editing.

**Practical Experience Examples**

* **Sub-program Level:** Input Council, Management Team, committees, fundraising
* **State/Provincial/National:** Program Input Council, Program Athlete Congress, Program Board of Directors, Management Team, committees, fundraising, National Leadership Councils
* **International:** Congress, committees, task forces, fundraising

**Sports Major**

**Course Requirements for Coaching**

* Introduction to Athlete Leadership
* Athletes as Coaches
* Email, Internet and Search Engines [Technology]
* Coaching Special Olympics Athletes
* Social Media *(Elective)*
* Sport-specific Skills Course
* Sport-Specific Tactics Course *(Elective)*
* Leadership/Independent Study

**Course Requirements for Officiating**

* Introduction to Athlete Leadership
* Athletes as Officials
* Email, Internet and Search Engines [Technology]
* Coaching Special Olympics Athletes
* Social Media *(Elective)*
* Sport-Specific Officiating (not yet designed)
* Leadership/Independent Study
* National Governing Body Officials Course *(Elective)*

***Coaching***

**Athletes as Coaches Course**

**Curriculum:**  Preparation for athletes to be certified as coaches at the level they desire; experience working with athletes as a coach; introduce athletes and mentors to the process of working together as a team; discuss the various roles of a coach; learn coaching by practicing many skills during course time.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to become an assistant or head coach; understanding of the coach’s role during both practice and competition and in the planning process.

**Practicum:** Work with athletes 8-10 sessions.

**Email, Internet and Search Engines Course [Technology]**

**Curriculum:** How to use e-mail, search engines and the internet.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to use e-mail and the internet to become better communicators and athlete leaders.

**Practicum**: Set up personal email on Gmail and have 10 athletes in address book. Show proof of regular emailing for 6-months after course ends. This task is assigned by instructor.

**Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course** *(online or face-to-face course)*

**Curriculum:** This course prepares Special Olympics coaches to use their sport-specific knowledge in coaching and/or working with athletes who have intellectual disabilities. The 24/7 convenience and low cost make it attractive to new coaches in preparation for their first Special Olympics coaching role. It can be accessed via Human Kinetics at <http://www.asep.com/asep_content/org/SONA.cfm>. Athletes and their mentors jointly take the course, which models head coach and assistant coach working together. It also meets the Special Olympics standards and competencies for coach certification. For veteran Special Olympics coaches, this course serves as a reminder of the essentials sometimes forgotten after years of coaching. The course also satisfies the Special Olympics recertification or continuing education requirement.

**Practicum:** Complete a season or 10-hour practicum in working with athletes.

**Social Media Course** (*Elective* - being developed)

**Curriculum:** Computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to understand, create and maintain a Facebook page as well as posts via blog, Instant Message, Twitter, etc.

**Practicum:** Create a Facebook page for your local Program and/or as an individual. Send 6 posts that are shared and 6 posts that are individual via social media. 6 of the 12 must include pictures. 1 of the posts must include a video.

**Sport-Specific Skills Course**

**Note:** This is a sport-specific instructional program sanctioned by Special Olympics, Inc. The course contains information on fundamental skills, practice planning, events and rules. In addition to course room instruction, there is a hands-on session working with Special Olympics athletes in fundamental skill instruction. These courses are NOT offered within the Athlete Leadership University Curriculum, but are offered throughout the year at various locations. Some of the sports are offered online via the American Sport Education Program (ASEP) <http://www.asep.com/asep_content/org/SONA.cfm> and the National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS eLearnCenter) (<http://nfhslearn.com/courses/36000>).

**Practicum:** Complete a season or 10-hour practicum of working with Special Olympics athletes

**Tactics Course** *(Elective)*

This is a sport-specific instructional program sanctioned by Special Olympics, Inc. The course contains strategies to improve training programs, creating and adapting drills, new rules updates, effective coaching strategies and techniques preparing for, during and following competition. These courses are NOT offered within the Athlete Leadership University Curriculum, but are offered throughout the year at various locations. Some of the sports are offered online via the American Sport Education Program (ASEP) <http://www.asep.com/asep_content/org/SONA.cfm> and the National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS) eLearn Center (<http://nfhslearn.com/courses/36000>).

**Practicum:** Complete a season or 10-hour practicum of working with Special Olympics athletes

***Officiating***

**Athletes as Officials Course**

**Curriculum:** Official’s code of ethics; the official’s checklist; identify potential problems and how to avoid them; “athlete-centered” officiating; learn how to stage athletes, start races, umpire and judge finishes; officiate several athletics events; and understand the importance of safety.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with all the basic skills necessary to begin serving on competition management teams at a local or regional competition. Implement the golden rule for officials at all times. Decide to grow as an official and experience different roles, working up to officiating at Program-level events and then becoming an NGB certified official passing all written and practical tests.

**Practicum:** Help officiate at 5 Local and Subprogram Games.

**Email, Internet and Search Engines Course [Technology]**

**Curriculum:** How to use e-mail, search engines and the internet.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to use e-mail and the internet to become better communicators and athlete leaders.

**Practicum**: Set up personal email on Gmail and have 10 athletes in address book. Show proof of regular emailing for 6-months after course ends. This task is assigned by instructor.

**Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course** *(online or face-to-face course)*

**Curriculum:** This course prepares Special Olympics coaches to use their sport-specific knowledge in coaching and/or working with athletes who have intellectual disabilities. The 24/7 convenience and low cost make it attractive to new coaches in preparation for their first Special Olympics coaching role. It can be accessed via Human Kinetics at <http://www.asep.com/asep_content/org/SONA.cfm>. Athletes and their mentors jointly take the course, which models head coach and assistant coach working together. It also meets the Special Olympics standards and competencies for coach certification. For veteran Special Olympics coaches, this course serves as a reminder of the essentials sometimes forgotten after years of coaching. The course also satisfies the Special Olympics recertification or continuing education requirement.

**Practicum:** Complete 5 additional officiating opportunities with Special Olympics athletes.

**Social Media Course** (*Elective* - being developed)

***Curriculum:*** *Computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks.*

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills necessary to understand, create and maintain a Facebook page as well as posts via blog, Instant Message, Twitter, etc.

**Practicum:** Create a Facebook page for your local Program and/or as an individual. Send 6 posts that are shared and 6 posts that are individual via social media. 6 of the 12 must include pictures. 1 of the posts must include a video.

**National Governing Body Officiating Course** *(Elective)*

**Curriculum:** After an athlete has complete the Athlete as Officials Course and the Leadership/Independent Study Course for Officials, an athlete may upon the recommendation of an NGB official and or local official mentor enroll in the class of that sport. Athlete Officials are expected to complete course and pass a written and practical exam. An athlete should have a local official to serve as a mentor official thru the process.

**Goals:** Provide athletes with the skills and knowledge necessary to officiate their sport in a community, school, recreational or Special Olympics setting.

**Practicum:** Athlete-official continues officiating at least 5 competitions adhering to NGB requirements.

**Practical experience examples for coaching and officiating**

* **Subprogram Level:** assistant coach, head coach, team manager; official, timer, scorer
* **State/Provincial/National:** assistant coach, head coach, team manager; official, timer, scorer
* **International:** assistant coach, head coach, team manager; official, timer, scorer

**Athlete Leadership University Practicum Requirements**

All practicum work must be completed AFTER completing an Athlete Leadership University course. Presentations and time spent in the course do not count toward completed practicum.

**Introduction to Athlete Leadership Course**

* + Become a Class A Volunteer.
  + Attend a General/Volunteer Orientation.
  + Complete 10 hours of volunteer activities for Special Olympics.
  + View ATHLETE LEADERSHIP video online if not shown during course

**Communications**

1. **Global Messenger Course**
   * Make 8 presentations to 5 internal and 3 external audiences about Special Olympics within 8-12 months.
2. **Email, Internet and Search Engines Course [Technology]** 
   * Set up personal email on Gmail and have 10 athletes in address book. Show proof of completing other measurements listed on practicum requirements.
3. **Working with the Media Course\***

* Conduct 1 print interview, 2 radio interviews, 2 TV interview within 12-months

1. **PowerPoint Course**
   * Create a new 25 slide PowerPoint presentation to a group about topic related to your Athlete Leadership University major.
2. **Social Media Course\* *(Elective)***

* Create a Facebook page for your local Program and/or as an individual.
* Send 6 posts that are shared and 6 posts that are individual via social media; 6 of the 12 must include pictures; 1 of the posts must include a video.

1. **Advanced Global Messenger Course\***

* Make 8 presentations within 6-12 months to external audiences using at least 3 different target markets

1. **Leadership/ Independent Study**
   * Complete 6 advanced planning, goals and leadership exercises.
   * Implemented one-on-one.

**Sports – Coaching**

1. **Athletes as Coaches**

* Work with athletes 8-10 sessions.

1. **Email, Internet and Search Engines Course [Technology]**

* Set up personal email on Gmail and have 10 athletes in address book. Show proof of completing other measurements listed on practicum requirements.

1. **Coaching Special Olympics Athletes** *(online or in-class course)*
   * Complete a season or 10-hour practicum of working with Special Olympics athletes.
2. **Social Media Course\* *(Elective)***

* Create a Facebook page for your local Program and/or as an individual.
* Send 6 posts that are shared and 6 posts that are individual via social media; 6 of the 12 must include pictures; 1 of the posts must include a video.

1. **Sport-Specific Skills Course** 
   * These courses are not offered within the Athlete Leadership University Curriculum. They are the regular courses that any volunteer coach would take.
   * Complete a season or 10-hour practicum of working with Special Olympics athletes.
2. **Sport-Specific Tactics Course *(Elective)***
   * These courses are not offered within the Athlete Leadership University Curriculum. They are the regular courses that any volunteer coach would take.
   * Complete a season or 10-hour practicum of working with Special Olympics athletes.
3. **Leadership/ Independent Study**
   * Complete 6 advanced planning, goals and leadership exercises.
   * Implemented one-on-one.

**Sports – Officiating**

1. **Athletes as Officials Course**
   * Complete a full season as an official
   * Serve on a competition management team at Games.
2. **Email, Internet and Search Engines Course [Technology]**

* Set up personal email on Gmail and have 10 athletes in address book.
* Show proof of completing other measurements listed on practicum requirements

1. **Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course** *(Online or In Class Course)*
   * Complete 5 additional officiating opportunities with Special Olympics athletes.
2. **Social Media Course\* *(Elective)***

* Create a Facebook page for your local Program and/or as an individual.
* Send 6 posts that are shared and 6 posts that are individual via social media; 6 of the 12 must include pictures; 1 of the posts must include a video.

1. **National Governing Body (NGB) Officiating Course *(Elective)***
   * These courses are not offered within the Athlete Leadership University Curriculum. They are the regular courses that any official would take.
   * Athlete-official continues officiating at least 5 competitions adhering to NGB requirements.
2. **Leadership/Independent Study**
   * Complete six advanced planning, goals and leadership exercises surrounding officiating.
   * Implement on a one-on-one basis.

**Governance**

1. **Committees and Athlete Input Councils Course**
   * Attend 1 Subprogram Management Team meeting, I Games Management Meeting, 2 Athlete Input Council meetings and start an Input Council if there is not one.
   * Substitute 2 community meetings and 2 Special Olympics meeting of some kind.
2. **Email, Internet and Search Engines Course [Technology]** 
   * Set up personal email on Gmail and have 10 athletes in address book.
   * Show proof of regular emailing for 6-months after course ends to instructor.
3. **Experiencing Athlete Input Council Course\***

* Serve as a chair of an Athlete Input Council at least once.
* Serves as a member providing feedback to committee members. Participate in at least 6 opportunities/input meetings with 6 different topics.

1. **PowerPoint Course**
   * Make a new 25 slide PowerPoint presentation to a group about topic related to your Athlete Leadership University major or if not in University, make a presentation about Athlete Leadership.
2. **Social Media Course\* *(Elective)***

* Create a Facebook page for your local Program and/or as an individual.
* Send 6 posts that are shared and 6 posts that are individual via social media; 6 of the 12 must include pictures; 1 of the posts must include a video.

1. **Developing Athletes as Board Members Course\* *(Elective)***
   * Attend two committee meetings at the Subprogram level; attend three Board of Directors meetings at Program level.
   * Attend one community organization Board of Directors meeting; cannot include Input Council meetings.
2. **Leadership/Independent Study**
   * Complete six advanced planning, goals and leadership exercises.
   * Implemented on a one-on-one basis.

**Sample Athlete Leadership Management Team Directory**

**PUT YOUR DIRECTORY HERE- Any Format**

The following people coordinate and manage the Athlete Leadership Program in your Program:

**Program/National Leaders and Course Trainers**

**Special Olympics Program/National Staff Liaison**

Name Email Phone

**Program Athlete Leadership Coordinator(s):** Facilitate and Train the various courses offered.

Name Email Phone

**Introduction to Athlete Leadership Trainers**

Name Email Phone

**Committees and Input Council Trainers:**

Name Email Phone

**Global Messenger Trainers:**

Name Email Phone

**Email Technology 1 Trainers**

Name Email Phone

**PowerPoint Trainers**

Name Email Phone

**Athletes as Coaches Trainers**

Name Email Phone

**Athletes as Officials Trainers**

Name Email Phone

**Add other Course Trainers as needed**

Name Email Phone

Name Email Phone

**Local Program Athlete Leadership Coordinators**

Area 1 – Name Email Phone

Area 2 – Name Email Phone

Area 3 – Name Email Phone

Area 4 – Name Email Phone

Area 5 – Name Email Phone

Area 6 – Name Email Phone

Area 7 – Name Email Phone

Area 8 – Name Email Phone

Area 9 – Name Email Phone

Area 10 – Name Email Phone

Area 11 – Name Email Phone

**Athlete Leaders Serving in Key Leadership Roles**

**Athlete Congress Chair:**

Name Email Phone

**Athlete Board Member:**

Name Email Phone

**Past Congress Chair:**

Name Email Phone

**Past Board Member:**

Name Email Phone

**Program Athlete Input Council Chair:**

Name Email Phone

**Add your own \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_:**

Name Email Phone

**Sample State/Provincial/National Program AIC**

1 – Name Email Phone

2 – Name Email Phone

3 – Name Email Phone

4 – Name Email Phone

5 – Name Email Phone

6 – Name Email Phone

7 – Name Email Phone

8 – Name Email Phone

9 – Name Email Phone

10 – Name Email Phone

11 – Name Email Phone

**Getting Additional Information about Athlete Leadership**

Go to the Special Olympics, Inc. website and click on Resources to access additional information on Athlete Leadership.

Special Olympics Inc. resources website:[**resources.specialolympics.org**](http://resources.specialolympics.org)

**Sample Athlete Leader Contract**

By signing below, each **Athlete Leader** agrees to the following:

1. Follow the Special Olympics Code of Conduct, and practice respect, courtesy, and good sportsmanship.
2. I am an athlete in good standing, am at least 16 years of age and currently train and compete in at least one sport.
3. Recognize that as an Athlete Leader, I am a representative of Special Olympics at all levels at all times.
4. Will take as many courses as possible to help me grow as an athlete leader depending on my interest and ability.
5. Attend scheduled Athlete Leadership meetings (any type) as needed. I will let my Mentor know if I have transportation challenges
6. Read over meeting materials with my Mentor ahead of time so that I will be able to offer my comments and suggestions.
7. Work with my Mentor ~ ask him or her questions if I do not understand something and offer my suggestions that might improve the Special Olympics athlete experience.
8. In order to become a knowledge Athlete Leader, I commit to participate in the Athlete Leadership activities for two years.

Athlete name (printed) Subprogram/Program Name

Athlete signature Witness – Mentor name

Dates of Commitment

**Roles of the Mentor**

1. Serve many purposes such as mentor; speech coach; coach; official; volunteer.
2. Know your athlete.
3. Work with parents, guardians or day training programs, schools and group homes to explain what Athlete Leadership is.
4. Be knowledgeable about Special Olympics.
5. Always give encouragement – especially before a speech, meeting or event.
6. Listen – people want to know what the athlete thinks, not the ideas of the helper.
7. Act as a leadership “coach” and role model
8. Allow the athlete to express him or herself – give help only if asked
9. Value your athlete’s opinions and preferences and help refine and articulate ideas.
10. Provide constructive feedback.
11. Ensure athlete has meaningful positions of leadership.
12. Help athletes stay on task and ensure follow through.
13. Help athlete understand minutes of meetings, after action notes and to do lists
14. Assist athlete with technology and paperwork.
15. Help work through transportation challenges.
16. Help athletes with medical or diet needs.
17. Work one-on-one with your athlete during each course and to help with follow-up tasks.
18. Commit to a partnership with your athlete to make his or her Athlete Leadership experience as meaningful and educational as possible.
19. Be an advocate for your athlete and all athletes.
20. Provide support *as needed.*

Represent Special Olympics professionally and follow the Special Olympics Code of Conduct

****

**Sample Mentor Contract**

By signing below, each **mentor** agrees to the following:

1. I am a Class A Volunteer in good standing and at least 18 years of age.
2. I will always help my athlete leader develop and express ***his or her*** opinions. When serving as a Mentor, I will ***never*** push my opinion on an athlete leader. Doing so will often cause the athlete to adapt your view and not express theirs. Value your Athlete Leader’s opinions and preferences.
3. Be encouraging and supportive. Make sure you respect athletes as equal partners in your Special Olympics experience.
4. Listen to your athlete, both during experiential activities and at meetings. Should your athlete have questions or need direction take the time to understand what your athletes is asking.
5. Mentors should work with parents, guardians, or programs serving persons with intellectual disabilities to explain what Athlete Leadership is, and help the others understand the significance of the program to the athlete.
6. The Mentor should be an advocate for the athlete, making sure the athlete leader experiences meaningful positions of influence and leadership.
7. Remember that you are **not** the group leader in meeting.
8. Be willing to help the athlete stay on task while attending events or meetings, but understand that it is the athlete’s responsibility to speak for themselves.
9. Ensure that the athlete understands the minutes or after action to do lists is prepared for any questions or discussion that may arise from the minutes.
10. Attend classes with your athlete and participate in the appropriate training opportunities throughout the year. Work on a one-on-one relationship with your athlete during each course and during the required practical experience.
11. Ensure that your athlete arranges transportation to and from classes, meetings or activities. Assist as needed.
12. If I am a parent, I am serving as a mentor on a trial basis as my athlete might prefer to have a mentor but we have not found one for him or her.
13. Agree to a two-year commitment to partner with your Athlete Leader to make their Athlete Leadership experience as meaningful and educational as possible.

Mentor name (printed) Subprogram/Program Name

Mentor signature Athlete name

Dates of Commitment

**Sample Athlete Leadership Practicum Form ⯎**

**Introduction to Athlete Leadership *Course***

*To receive credit for courses attended; this form must be completed and returned by the deadline.*

**Must** be returned to Program office by email by

Athlete name Phone

Address E-mail

Mentor name Phone

Address E-mail

Name of Program you represent

**Certification requirements for the *Introduction to Athlete Leadership Course*:**

Date of Course: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Instructors:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Completed 10 Service Hours with your Mentor

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hours\_\_\_\_ Job\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Completed a General/Volunteer Orientation

Date: Instructor: Location:

1. Attached a copy of the Class A Volunteer Form for Athlete **and** Mentor or whatever your Program requires
2. Attached any other documentation required by your Program office
3. Feedback:

What are some of the things you learned from your practicum experiences?

What “major” or area of interest did you choose (Communications; Sports; Governance)?

**Must be signed below**:

(Signature of Athlete) (Date) (Signature of Mentor/Helper) (Date)

Athlete Leader Coordinator (Date) Athlete Leader Coordinator (Print) (Date)