



*Special
Olympics*



GLOBAL BADMINTON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2026 – 2031





SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES BERLIN 2023

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Introduction

As the global governing bodies for Badminton & Special Olympics, the Badminton World Federation (BWF) and Special Olympics International (SOI) continue in partnership to create inclusive, meaningful opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to engage in all aspects of badminton, whether as athletes, Unified partners, coaches, officials, volunteers or others.



Dr. Timothy Shriver
Chairman, Special Olympics International

"The partnership between Special Olympics and the Badminton World Federation is a testament to what can happen when shared values meet a shared vision. Since the launch of our first joint development plan, we have witnessed remarkable growth, more athletes engaged, more coaches trained, and more communities discovering the joy and possibility that this sport brings."

This second edition builds on that strong foundation. It reflects the commitment of BWF President Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul and her team, whose leadership has helped ensure that badminton is accessible, inclusive, and transformative for athletes with intellectual disabilities worldwide. Together, we are demonstrating that sport is not simply a game, but a global force for dignity, unity, and opportunity.

To every partner, coach, volunteer, and athlete who has contributed to this progress: thank you. Your efforts illuminate the path forward. With this renewed plan, we reaffirm our belief in the power of partnership, and in the unlimited potential of the athletes we serve."



Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul
President, Badminton World Federation

"Our partnership with Special Olympics lies at the heart of BWF's mission to give every child the chance to enjoy badminton for life. Badminton is a sport for all, transcending barriers, celebrating ability, and opening doors to inclusion, health, and joy. Together, we have already taken important steps, including the inclusion of badminton at the Special Olympics World Games 2023, the signing of national-level MOUs, and the steady growth of Special Olympics athletes and trained coaches worldwide, demonstrating the real impact of our shared purpose."

Through this renewed strategic plan with Special Olympics, we deepen our shared commitment to make badminton truly accessible and transformative for athletes with intellectual disabilities around the world. Together, we affirm that sport is not just a game; it is a lifelong pathway to dignity, confidence, and a rich, fulfilling life. I am deeply grateful to Dr Timothy Shriver and his inspiring team at Special Olympics for walking this journey with us. Together, We Lead. Together, We Achieve. Together, We Shine."

Vision

Provide meaningful opportunities for people with an intellectual and/or developmental disability to be involved in all aspects of badminton.

From Foundation to the Future

In 2019, Special Olympics and the Badminton World Federation revitalized their partnership at the Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi with a new Memorandum of Understanding. Building on this momentum, the first-ever joint Global Strategic Badminton Development Plan was launched for 2020–2024.

Together, the Special Olympics movement and the global badminton community have driven sustainable, high-quality growth and impact, united by the shared vision of creating meaningful opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of badminton. Key highlights include:

- ◀ **19** new country and state Special Olympics programs add badminton to their sport offering
- ◀ **103** total countries and state programs offer badminton
- ◀ **62** partnerships between Special Olympics programs and Badminton Member Associations
- ◀ Increase in participation
 - ▷ **11,440** new athletes
 - ▷ **2,737** new Unified partners
 - ▷ **1,703** new coaches
 - ▷ **1,154** new certified coaches
- ◀ Total Participation
 - ▷ **137,803** athletes
 - ▷ **36,212** Unified partners
 - ▷ **13,464** coaches
 - ▷ **11,385** certified coaches

This new 2026-2031 strategy builds upon the momentum and achievements of the [2020-2024 Global Badminton Development Strategy](#), as detailed in the joint BWF & SOI Impact Report, and sets a bold vision for continued growth, quality and inclusion through the next two editions of the Special Olympics World Games.



United in Purpose: Voices of the Community

Athlete, Special Olympics Ireland

Being part of the SO Badminton family has given me a wonderful opportunity to meet amazing people. It has also given me the support to promote special olympics badminton in my community. It has helped me develop as a person, and I have grown in confidence and self-awareness.



Unified Sport Delegate, United Arab Emirates

Badminton has shown me how powerfully sport can uplift every athlete. Through work with SOI, BWF and SO UAE, I've witnessed incredible courage, joy, and unity. Each smile and triumph reminds me why this sport matters – because badminton doesn't just build skills; it reveals potential, celebrates equality, and connects us through shared purpose everywhere.



Senior Sports Director, Special Olympics East Asia

Being part of this global badminton community unites diverse voices to empower athletes, encourage inclusive progress, and connect cultures across East Asia through a shared vision that celebrates resilience, joy, and limitless potential.



Coach, Special Olympics Arizona

Coaching badminton is my favorite thing to do. Coaching alongside so many great coaches around the world is incredible. I can't wait for badminton to be added to the Special Olympics USA Games in 2030!



Technical Official, Malaysia

Since 2022, SO badminton has shown me how the sport strengthens athletes' confidence, communication, and character. Their determination during training and competition reminds me that inclusion drives real change and makes every effort worthwhile.



Unified Partners, Special Olympics Colombia

Being part of the SO global badminton community means growing together, supporting one another, and celebrating our shared passion. It's a space of respect, inclusion, and friendship where we trust our abilities, uplift our teammates, and show how sport can truly transform lives.



Sport Director, Special Olympics Senegal

Joining the badminton community strengthens inclusion in my country, giving athletes the chance to discover a new sport, explore new possibilities, progress confidently, and proudly demonstrate their growing abilities.

President, Guam National Badminton Federation

SO badminton encourages meaningful involvement, ensuring the joy of the sport is shared widely and remains accessible. I'm proud to contribute to a community that reaches outward to uplift, include, and inspire people everywhere.



Secretary General, Badminton Oceania

The global SO badminton community offers belonging beyond sport, creating a welcoming environment where people feel valued, included, and connected through experiences that bring individuals together in inspiring and meaningful ways.



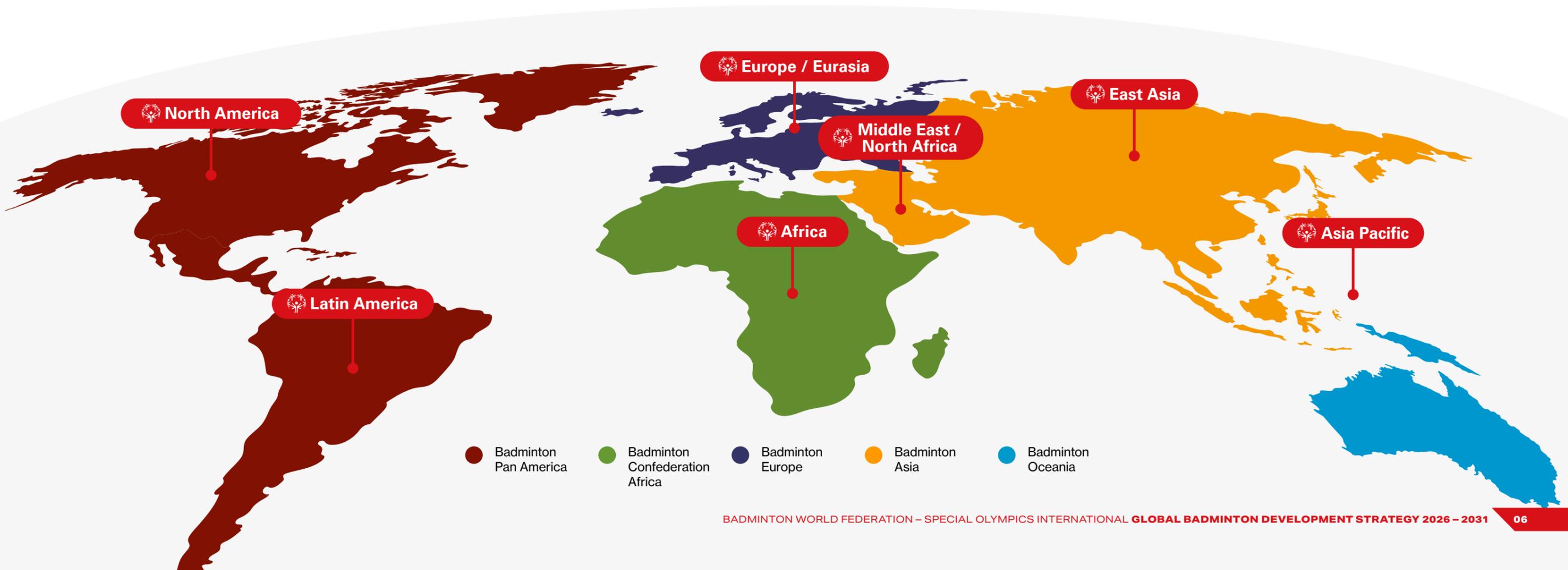
Implementation Partners

The BWF and SOI will work together with a number of regional and national partners to implement this Global Badminton Development Strategy. To ensure maximum impact and sustainability, there is a focus within the strategy to filter training, resources and competition down to the national level.

The BWF's five Continental Confederations and SOI's nine Regional Programmes work in close collaboration with over 200 National Member Associations and Programmes to develop badminton globally. These partnerships aim to provide opportunities for people with an intellectual disability to access high quality sports training and competition opportunities.



Badminton Confederation Africa



Key Impact Areas



Pillar 1 Development

Deliver high-quality, inclusive training and participation opportunities for Special Olympics athletes, Unified partners, and coaches. Ensure programs are accessible across all ages, genders, and ability levels, while promoting badminton as a lifelong, inclusive sport for all.



Pillar 4 Communications

Amplify the joint impact of BWF and SOI by sharing compelling stories and key messages that promote inclusion, health and wellbeing, and the social benefits of sport. Utilize strategic communications to inspire engagement, increase visibility, and position badminton as a sport for all.



Pillar 2 Competition & Events

Expand access to meaningful and empowering competition experiences for Special Olympics athletes and Unified partners across local, national, regional, and global platforms. Emphasize athlete development, personal growth, and the joy of participation through well-organized, high-quality events.



Pillar 3 Partnerships

Foster strong, multi-level partnerships between BWF and SOI, as well as their respective national and regional members, to enhance the reach, quality, and sustainability of inclusive badminton programming. Leverage shared resources, networks, and expertise to support long-term athlete development and organizational collaboration.



KEY IMPACT AREA 1

DEVELOPMENT

KEY IMPACT AREA 1 / Development

| Impact Area | Strategy – Initiative | Key Performance Indicator |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION | ◀ Badminton Development Grants | ◀ Through targeted grant distribution, reach 110 Special Olympics Programs actively offering badminton |
| | ◀ Elevate Badminton's Status and Reach within Special Olympics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Badminton is officially recognized as a Level 1 sport within Special Olympics ◀ Grow global participation to over 200,000 athletes and Unified partners ◀ Increase the number of certified badminton coaches to 13,100 worldwide |
| | ◀ Coach Education – SOI & BWF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Deliver four BWF Coach Education Level 1 courses for Special Olympics coaches ◀ Deliver four Shuttle Time Education courses for Special Olympics teachers and coaches ◀ Track and record Special Olympics coaches with Shuttle Time or BWF Coach Education certifications in BWF's online system ◀ Special Olympics online course education courses added to BWF Coach resources ◀ 500 badminton coaches have taken Special Olympics Coach Courses Level 1, 2, 3 and Unified Sports on Special Olympics Learning Management System |
| | ◀ Coach Education – Continental Confederations & Special Olympics regions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Special Olympics regions and programs are integrated into Continental Confederation Coach Level 1 and Shuttle Time courses ◀ Special Olympics coaches integrated into 15 BWF Coach Level 1 courses through National Associations and Continental Confederations ◀ Special Olympics coaches integrated into the delivery of 110 BWF Shuttle Time teacher courses |
| | ◀ Young Athletes & Junior Athletes – Mini Shuttle Time | ◀ Mini Shuttle Time content integrated into SOI Young Athletes and Junior Athletes programs |
| | ◀ SOI Online Program/Training | ◀ BWF Shuttle Time Inclusivity modules promoted and distributed through SOI networks and channels |
| | ◀ Research | ◀ Conduct two evidence-based studies on the physical, social, emotional and/or developmental impact of badminton for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities |

| Impact Area | Strategy – Initiative | Key Performance Indicator |
|------------------|--|---|
| EQUIPMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ SOI-BWF Equipment Sets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Launch Special Olympics & BWF Equipment program ◀ Distribute 100+ equipment sets to Special Olympics programs |
| FITNESS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Fitness Captains | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Train 100 badminton athletes to serve as Fitness Captains ◀ Fitness Captains are athletes on a sports team who lead the team in activities related to fitness and a healthy lifestyle. Teams that have Fitness Captains will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Complete safe and effective warm-up and cool-down routines ◀ Learn health education tips or lessons ◀ Be supported to practice healthy behaviors and encouraged to participate in additional health/fitness programming |



KEY IMPACT AREA 2

COMPETITION & EVENTS

KEY IMPACT AREA 2 Competition & Events

| Impact Area | Strategy – Initiative | Key Performance Indicator |
|-----------------|---|--|
| WORLD | ◀ Special Olympics World Games 2027 & 2031 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Badminton included as an official sport at the 2027 and 2031 Special Olympics World Games with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◁ 200+ athletes participating ◁ Representation from 60+ countries ◁ One dedicated BWF Activation Zone ◁ Participation of Sport Ambassadors ◁ On-site Equipment Distribution Program |
| | ◀ Special Olympics World Games Coaching Standards | ◀ 100% of Head Coaches hold BWF Coach Education Level 1 certification at the 2027 and 2031 Special Olympics World Games |
| | ◀ Special Olympics Officials Program | ◀ Delivery of an Inclusive Technical Officials Program featuring officials with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities |
| | ◀ Young Athletes Integration | ◀ BWF Shuttle Time activities embedded within the Young Athletes activations at the World Games |
| | ◀ BWF World Tour Inclusion | ◀ A Special Olympics division included in one annual BWF World Tour Event |
| REGIONAL | ◀ Regional Competitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Host six regional Special Olympics badminton competitions supported by BWF Continental Confederations, across: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◁ Asia Pacific ◁ Europe Eurasia ◁ North America ◁ East Asia ◁ Middle East/North Africa ◁ Latin America |
| NATIONAL | ◀ National Competitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ 110 countries offering access to badminton competitions ◀ 110 countries offering access to unified badminton competitions |

| Impact Area | Strategy – Initiative | Key Performance Indicator |
|-------------|--|--|
| TECHNICAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Sport Impact Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Disseminate and promote understanding of Special Olympics Badminton Sport Impact Standards ◀ Publish the standards in all SOI official languages ◀ Review and update the Badminton Athlete Divisioning Assessment Form for Doubles |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Technical Delegate & Unified Sport Delegate Training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Deliver comprehensive technical workshops for Technical Delegates and Unified Sport Delegates, including modules for Line Judges, Umpires, and Referees |
| SPORT RULES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Special Olympics Badminton Rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Update Special Olympics badminton rules to align with BWF Rules ◀ AirBadminton officially included in Special Olympics Sport Rules as a competition event by 2031 |



KEY IMPACT AREA 3

PARTNERSHIPS

KEY IMPACT AREA 3 PARTNERSHIPS

| Impact Area | Strategy – Initiative | Key Performance Indicator |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| GLOBAL | ◀ BWF-SOI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) | ◀ Renew and formalize the MOU between BWF and SOI under new leadership by 2026 |
| | ◀ Global Development Strategy | ◀ Develop and publish a BWF–SOI Global Badminton Development Strategy (2025–2031) |
| | ◀ Impact Reporting | ◀ Publish a comprehensive Impact Report summarizing the outcomes of the 2020–2024 Global Development Strategy |
| | ◀ Social & Humanitarian | ◀ Explore opportunities to collaborate on social and humanitarian initiatives and projects |
| REGIONAL | ◀ Continental and Regional Global Pledge – Call to Action | ◀ One global proclamation between all Continental Confederations & Special Olympics regions signed ◀ 5 Special Olympics regions & Continental Confederations create and publish action plan aligned with SOI-BWF Global Development plan |
| NATIONAL & LOCAL | ◀ Strengthening National and Local Partnerships | ◀ Establish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ 60 Level 3 (Comprehensive) Partnerships ◀ 30 Level 2 (Moderate) Partnerships ◀ 20 Level 1 (Foundational) Partnerships ◀ Partnerships to focus on 5 priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Coach Education & Training ◀ Access to Competition ◀ Access to Training Venues ◀ Officials Training ◀ Equipment & International Competition Support |
| | ◀ World Games Pledge Campaign | ◀ Launch and implement a World Games Pledge Campaign for National Badminton Federations and Special Olympics Programs |



KEY IMPACT AREA 4

COMMUNICATIONS

KEY IMPACT AREA 4 COMMUNICATIONS

| Impact Area | Strategy – Initiative | Key Performance Indicator |
|--|--|--|
| ARTICLES, PUBLICATIONS & STORYTELLING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media & Editorial Coverage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish dedicated content about inclusive badminton and BWF–SOI partnership on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special Olympics website BWF Development website BWF Fan website Secure features in targeted sports and development media outlets (e.g., AIPS, Inside the Games, Sport for Development, etc.) Confirm a list of 5–7 key media targets and publish in each by 2031 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign “Meet the Heroes” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-publish badminton athlete story as a part of Special Olympics’ wider “Meet the Heroes” campaign |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BWF Coverage of Special Olympics World Games | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure extensive communications and media coverage of SO athletes and Unified badminton at World Games through BWF digital platforms |
| SOCIAL MEDIA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Social Media Activation Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish quarterly posts across social media platforms to engage broader audience on Special Olympics badminton Establish clear content responsibilities and shared calendar between BWF and SOI comms teams |
| RESOURCES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Toolkit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop one comprehensive communications toolkit for global, regional, and national stakeholders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fact sheet Key messages Sample Q&A Visual assets (images, videos, logos) Suggested hashtags Sample social media captions and promotional content |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Resource Hub | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully update the Special Olympics Badminton Resource Page with all relevant materials Collaborate to include complementary content or cross-linking on BWF Development and Fan sites |



| Impact Area | Strategy – Initiative | Key Performance Indicator |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| <p>AMBASSADORS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Athlete and Sport Ambassador Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Identify and activate Special Olympics badminton athletes as official ambassadors to promote inclusion and badminton globally ◀ Engage at least one high-profile BWF athlete to serve as a Special Olympics Global Ambassador in alignment with the movement’s values |

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