

Special Olympics



Global Football Development Strategy

2025-2030





**Special
Olympics**

Contents:

<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>Special Olympics Football Landscape</u>	5
<u>Strategic Alignment</u>	9
<u>Key Objective Areas</u>	11
- <u>Development</u>	12
- <u>Partnerships</u>	14
- <u>Competitions</u>	16
- <u>Communications</u>	18
<u>Contact Information</u>	20

Introduction

Football is Special Olympics' most participated team sport. With more than 16,000 football events held annually, participated in by over 630,000 players, and present in over 200 programs.

Football offers the opportunity to breakdown barriers, promote inclusion, and improve health, all while providing the opportunities for players to develop leadership and life skills through sport.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS are global experts in *inclusive coaching* and sport delivery that leads to *improved health* and *social emotional wellbeing* for people with intellectual disabilities while raising awareness, educating the public and advocating for *increased social inclusion*.



"SPECIAL OLYMPICS IS PROUD TO CHAMPION THE POWER OF FOOTBALL TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, AND MENTAL WELL-BEING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES. TOGETHER, WE AIM TO BREAK DOWN BARRIERS, FOSTER INCLUSIVITY, AND DEMONSTRATE HOW THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR SPORT CAN UNITE INDIVIDUALS OF ALL ABILITIES, CREATING A STRONGER, MORE CONNECTED GLOBAL COMMUNITY."

- JON-PAUL ST. GERMAIN, VICE PRESIDENT OF SPORT DEVELOPMENT FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS INTERNATIONAL



Football Landscape



16,184
Football
Competitions in
Special Olympics in
2024



Athletes

473,572

Unified Athletes

135,680

Unified Partners

163,320



Coaches

48,814

Unified Coaches

19,674

Programs

219



Competition Landscape



Local Football
Opportunities
Including
outside of SO



Local SO
Program
Leagues, Cups,
Festivals,
Tournaments



Regional Games
and
Competitions
Invitational
Events



Unified Cup
World Games

Partnership Landscape

111 Special Olympics Programs have a partnership with the National Football Federation. These partnerships include engagement in 1 or more of the following areas:

1. Access to Competition & Training Venues
2. Coach Education and Training
3. Sports Officials Training & Competition
4. International Competition Support
5. Sport Equipment
6. Promotional Support
7. Uniform Support
8. Direct Financial Support
9. Research and Evaluation
10. Transportation Support



ENGAGED IN 1 AREA



ENGAGED IN 2-3 AREAS



ENGAGED IN MORE THAN 3 AREAS

CONFEDERATION Partnership Landscape

Special Olympics Regions have strategic partnerships with their respective Football Confederations. Currently the SOLA Region and the SOEE Region have MOU Partnerships with CONMEBOL and UEFA respectively.



Strategic Alignment

This Global Football Development Strategy is aligned with the [Special Olympics Global Strategic Plan](#) and the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Through the 4 Key Objective Areas of the Football Development Strategy, Special Olympics will achieve the goals set out in the Strategic Plan of:

Goal A: *Improving local sports participation and well-being to strengthen communities*

Goal B: *Removing barriers to inclusion and expand reach through digital technology*



Football Development – The Influence



INVESTMENT IN
FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT
WILL INFLUENCE ALL
LEVELS OF THE GAME

Key Objective Areas

Development

- Coach Development
- Unified Football
- Gender Equity
- Research

Communications

- Resources
- Media

Football for Social Change

Partnerships

- Global
- Regional
- National
- Local

Competitions

- National & Local
- Regional
- Global
- Technical Support





Key Objective Area 1

Development

Development

Priority Area	Strategy - Initiative	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
COACH DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federation Coach Education for SO Coaches Integrate coach development into all grant opportunities All World Games and Unified Cup coaches trained to sufficient Coaching Standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish system to track federation certified coaches 100% Head Coaches at Unified Cup certified by National/Regional Federation Reached 100 SO Programs listing Coach Education as a benefit on Sport Partnership Survey
UNIFIED FOOTBALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand and promote Unified Sports in Football, with focus on youth Global Unified Cup Advancement Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase Unified sports with club, league, and federation partners at showcase events Programs qualify to Unified Cup through regional /national qualifiers
GENDER EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing equal opportunities for male and female athletes and unified partners to compete Increase number of certified and active female coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50/50 split for quota at all SOI competitions Increase female participation globally to 40% 100% female Head Coaches at Unified cup for female teams
RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research with partner Universities and Federations/Confederations highlighting the social, emotional, physical, and mental benefits of Special Olympics Football 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 study on the physical characteristics of football in Special Olympics 1 study on the social impact of SO Football



Key Objective Area 2

Partnerships

Partnerships

Priority Area	Strategy - Initiative	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation of partnerships with local clubs and leagues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish method and infrastructure to capture information regarding local level partnerships. Capture and create 3 case studies on local level partnership and impact.
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation/Continuation of partnerships with National Federations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth of Partnerships by 10% to 126 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 Level 3 Partnerships 40 Level 2 Partnerships 26 Level 1 Partnerships
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation of formal partnerships with all Regional Confederations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal partnerships with 4 confederations by 2030 Formal partnerships with all confederations by 2035
Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal partnership with International Governing Body - FIFA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal agreement with FIFA by 2030 Global Football Week – run in partnership with FIFA and confederations for all regions

Key Objective Area 3

Competitions



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
UNIFIED CUP
DETROIT 2022

Presented by
TOYOTA

Competitions

Priority Area	Strategy - Initiative	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
National & Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering of regular and consistent training and competition opportunities for all ability levels. National Football Competitions/Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking of offered training and competition opportunities. More than 17,000 football competitions
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Football Competitions Regional Advancement Process to qualify for World Games and Unified Cup All regions follow Sport Impact Standards (SIS) Football protocol Engagement with regional football federations for Special Olympics opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 regional football competitions by 2030 All competitions follow SIS protocol 50% of participants in Unified Cup 2032 will qualify through advancement process 3 Special Olympics Football Tournaments endorsed by Confederations by 2030
Global	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand offering at Unified Cup to 50/50 male/female players Enhancement of SIS protocol at World Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal number of male and female players at Unified Cup (192) by 2036
Technical Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of technical officials in SIS protocol Training of Officials with ID/D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run SIS protocol training for technical officials in 7 regions Training of officials with IDD to have >10 at World Games in 2035

Key Objective Area 4

Communications



Communications

Priority Area	Strategy - Initiative	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight and share the resources Special Olympics offers for football coaches, officials, athletes, partners, clubs, leagues, federations, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased viewing metrics of Football resources by 10%
Social Media and Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase football stories on website + diversify regional coverage Increase social media posts promoting SO football events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish 5x football stories online per year covering 5 different regions Promotion of football events on social media – 2x per year
Partner Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have Special Olympics representation at major partner events Promote partner events on Special Olympics channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present at partner events 1x per year 1x story per year on partner website/social media highlighting Special Olympics football
Ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and promote global football ambassadors Identify and promote regional/national football ambassadors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize international global ambassadors to promote Special Olympics football Promote athlete leader as a football ambassador

Contact Information

If you have any inquiries regarding Special Olympics Football, please contact:



JEFF LAHART

Lead, Global Football Development

Special Olympics International

Email Address: jlahart@specialolympics.org

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS
2600 Virginia Ave NW, 11th Floor
Washington, DC 20037 USA