



Special Olympics World Games History:

20 July 1968

Together with the Chicago Park District, the Kennedy Foundation plans and underwrites the First International Special Olympics Summer Games, held in Chicago's Soldier Field, with 1,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities from 26 U.S. states and Canada competing in athletics, floor hockey and aquatics.

13-15 August 1970

The Second International Special Olympics Summer Games take place in Chicago, Illinois, with 2,000 athletes from all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and France.

13-18 August 1972

The Third International Special Olympics Summer Games are held at the University of California—Los Angeles with 2,500 participants.

7-11 August 1975

The Fourth International Special Olympics Summer Games take place at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, with 3,200 athletes from 10 countries taking part. The Games are broadcast nationwide on CBS-TV's "Sports Spectacular."

5-11 February 1977

The First International Special Olympics Winter Games are held in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, with more than 500 athletes competing in skiing and skating events. CBS, ABC and NBC television networks cover the Games.

8-13 August 1979

The Fifth International Special Olympics Summer Games take place at the State University of New York at Brockport, with more than 3,500 athletes from every state in the United States and more than 20 countries.

8-13 March 1981

The Second International Special Olympics Winter Games are held at the Village of Smugglers' Notch and Stowe, Vermont, with more than 600 Alpine and cross-country skiers and ice skaters participating.

12-18 July 1983

The Sixth International Special Olympics Summer Games are held at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. A crowd of more than 60,000 attends the Opening Ceremonies and approximately 4,000 athletes participate.

24-29 March 1985

Athletes from 14 countries are represented in skiing and skating events at the Third International Special Olympics Winter Games in Park City, Utah.

31 July-8 August 1987

The University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, host the Seventh International Special Olympics Summer Games. More than 4,700 athletes from more than 70 countries participate in 1987's largest amateur sports event. The Games are covered in Sports Illustrated and Time, and reach more than 150 million people worldwide.



Special Olympics

1-8 April 1989

The Fourth International Special Olympics Winter Games are held in Reno, Nevada, and Lake Tahoe, California. More than 1,000 athletes from 18 countries participate.

19-27 July 1991

The Eighth Special Olympics World Summer Games* are held in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. Six thousand athletes from more than 100 countries make this the largest sporting event in the world in 1991. (*The official name changes in 1991 from International Games to Special Olympics World Summer or World Winter Games.)

20-27 March 1993

The Fifth Special Olympics World Winter Games are held in Salzburg and Schladming, Austria, with 1,600 athletes from more than 50 countries participating in five winter sports. These are the first World Winter Games held outside North America.

1-9 July 1995

More than 7,000 athletes from 143 countries gather in New Haven, Connecticut, for competition in 21 sports at the ninth Special Olympics World Summer Games.

1-8 February 1997

Nearly 2,000 athletes from 73 countries compete in five Olympic-type winter sports in Toronto/Collingwood, Ontario, Canada, for the Sixth Special Olympics World Winter Games. This event is the world's largest winter multisport event in 1997.

26 June-4 July 1999

The 10th Special Olympics World Summer Games are held in the Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill area (Triangle) in North Carolina. More than 7,000 athletes representing 150 countries compete in 19 sports.

4-11 March 2001

More than 1,800 athletes representing approximately 70 countries compete in seven Olympic-type winter sports at the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Anchorage, Alaska. The Games are the largest sporting event ever held in the history of Alaska.

21-29 June 2003

The 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin, Ireland are the first summer Games ever held outside the United States, and are also the world's largest sporting event for 2003. More than 6,500 athletes from 150 countries participate in 18 competitive and three demonstration sports.

26 February - 5 March 2005

The 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games, held in Nagano, Japan, are the first World Games held in Asia. The Games draw more than 1,800 athletes from 84 countries, and thousands of families, volunteers, spectators and journalists from around the world. Nagano becomes the first city in the world to host the Olympics, Paralympics and Special Olympics World Games.

2 October – 11 October 2007

The 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games are held in Shanghai, People's Republic of China, from 2-11 October 2007. The event marks the first time the World Summer Games take place in Asia, and only the second time the Games are held outside the United States. Nearly 7,500 athletes, 40,000 volunteers, 3,500 event officials and thousands of families, spectators and journalists from every continent participate in the historic event.

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7 February – 13 February 2009

The 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games held in Boise, Idaho, attracted more than 2,500 athletes from nearly 100 nations to compete in seven Olympic-type sports: Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, figure skating, floor hockey, snowboarding, snowshoe racing and speed skating.

25 June – 4 July 2011

2011 Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Athens, Greece marking the second World Summer Games in Europe and only the third Summer Games held outside the U.S.

29 January – 5 February 2013

The 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games are set for PyeongChang, Korea. Special Olympics athletes from over 100 countries will compete in 8 different Olympic-type sports including: Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snow Boarding, Snow Shoeing, Short Track Speed Skating, Figure Skating, Floor Hockey and Floor Ball demonstration.

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