



## **Special Olympics** *Northern California*

Welcome to Special Olympics:

Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. In order to officially compete in a competition, participants must be at least 8 years old; however children between the ages of 5 and 7 years old can participate in training. Our programs give our athletes continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other athletes and the community. Currently in Northern California, we provide opportunities to over 13,000 children and adults in 12 different sports. **Special Olympics is free to all athletes.**

Included in this packet, you will find the following information:

- Athlete Application for Participation in Special Olympics ([www.BecomeAnAthleteSONC.org](http://www.BecomeAnAthleteSONC.org))
- Athlete Information Guide
- Family Registration Form

In order to participate in Special Olympics, all athletes must complete the following steps:

1. Complete the Athlete Application for Participation and have it signed by a licensed medical professional
2. Submit item 1 to: ***Special Olympics Northern California***  
***Attn: Judy Burton-Andrews***  
***3480 Buskirk Ave. #340***  
***Pleasant Hill, CA 94523***
3. Complete the Family Registration Form & submit to Donna Romero (optional)
4. Contact your local sports staff to find out how to get involved in the local sports program

Once the original Athlete Application for Participation is submitted to the Special Olympics office, it will take two weeks to process the information and for it to be entered in our database. After the two-week period, please contact your local sports staff to ensure that your application has been processed.

In the Spirit of Special Olympics,

Special Olympics Northern California Staff



**Special Olympics**  
*Northern California*

## Athlete Information Guide

### **What is Special Olympics?**

Special Olympics is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for individuals with intellectual disabilities by giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

### **The Special Olympics Athlete Oath**

Inspired by the gladiators from ancient Rome, Eunice Kennedy Shriver brought these words to the first Special Olympics Games, *"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."* This oath continues to be recited by Special Olympics athletes before competitions as they exude bravery and inspire greatness.

### **Why Special Olympics?**

Children and adults with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills, greater self-confidence and a more positive self-image. They grow mentally and socially and, through their activities, exhibit boundless courage and enthusiasm, enjoy the rewards of friendship and ultimately discover they can be active and contributing members of their communities.

### **What sports are offered at Special Olympics?**

Special Olympics offers 12 different sports: Aquatics, Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Floor Hockey, Golf, Powerlifting, Soccer, Softball, Track & Field, Tennis and Volleyball. Some sports may not be offered in all counties based on athlete interest and facility availability.

### **Does Special Olympics offer programs for athletes of all levels and abilities?**

Special Olympics prides itself on providing programs for all skill levels. We create competition environments based on each athlete's abilities by creating competition groups based on preliminary scores and times. This ensures that athletes compete based on skill, age and gender.

### **Who is eligible to participate in Special Olympics**

Special Olympics is open to every person with an intellectual disability regardless of the level/degree of that person's disability and whether or not that person also has other mental/physical disabilities.

### **My athlete would like to participate in more than one sport per season, is that okay?**

Sure! Athletes can attend practices for as many different sports as their schedules will allow.

### **Are there any age restrictions?**

In order to officially compete at a sports competition, athletes must be at least 8 years old. However, athletes between 5-7 years of age can come out for practices. There is no "cap" on how old an athlete can be. We have some very active athletes who are in their 50's and 60's and are still going strong into their 70's!

### **Does it cost to participate in Special Olympics?**

No!! Special Olympics athletes do not pay any fees to participate. Special Olympics is able to provide training and competitions opportunities for free, thanks to the generous support of individuals, organizations and corporations in our communities. Special Olympics receives no federal or state funding of any kind. Community support for our fundraising efforts is critical to the continued success of our Special Olympics programs.

### **My athlete doesn't know how to play the sport that they are interested in. Can they still participate?**

Yes, Special Olympics firmly believes that everyone can benefit from being part of a team, no matter what the skill level may be. Our coaches and volunteers will work with your athlete to teach them the skills they need in order to participate in their sport of choice.

### **What is the dress code at practices?**

Athletes should wear appropriate athletic attire to sport trainings. Usually, this includes athletic shoes with non-marking soles, short or sweats and a t-shirt. Swimmers must wear a swimsuit and provide a towel. Athletes who are not dressed appropriately will be asked to spectate.

### Sport Seasons

#### **Winter (January—March)**

Basketball

#### **Spring (March—June)**

Aquatics

Bocce

Tennis

Track & Field

Volleyball

#### **Summer (July—September)**

Golf

Softball

#### **Fall (September—December)**

Bowling

Floor Hockey

Powerlifting

Soccer

## Staff Contacts

### **Matt Cohen, Senior Vice President of Sports Programs**

*Volunteer Areas*  
(925) 944-8801 x227  
mattc@sonc.org

### **Oscar Hinojosa, Vice President, Regional Sports**

*Fresno County*  
(559) 355-6034  
oscarh@sonc.org

### **Jenny Choo, Vice President of Regional Sports**

*Alameda County*  
(408) 392-0170 x212  
jennyc@sonc.org

### **Cindy Blyther, Senior Regional Sports Director**

*Monterey, San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties*  
(408) 392-0170 x213  
cindyb@sonc.org

### **Josh Mandel-Sonner, Regional Sports Director** *Placer/Nevada, Sac/Yolo and San Joaquin Counties*

(916) 375-1930 x203  
joshms@sonc.org

### **Renee Ontiveros, Regional Sports Director**

*San Benito and Santa Clara Counties*  
(408) 392-0170 x204  
renee@sonc.org

### **Nate Evans, Regional Sports Director**

*Contra Costa, Marin and San Francisco Counties*  
(707) 578-5941  
natee@sonc.org

### **Judy Burton-Andrews, Director of Athlete and Donor Fulfillment**

*Volunteer Areas*  
(925) 944-8801 x214  
judy@sonc.org

## **Special Olympics Northern California**

3480 Buskirk Ave., #340  
Pleasant Hill, Ca 94523  
(925) 944-8801  
(925) 944-8803 (fax)  
**www.sonc.org**

## Special Olympics Athlete Code of Conduct

The Athlete Code of Conduct holds all Special Olympics athletes to the highest standards of competition in keeping with the Olympic spirit. All Special Olympics athletes are ambassadors for the Special Olympics movement all around the world.

As a Special Olympics athlete, I pledge that:

### **SPORTSMANSHIP**

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.
- I will not sue bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

### **TRAINING AND COMPETITION**

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to the coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning and competitions.
- I will not hold back in preliminaries just to get into an easier final heat.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS**

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.
- I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.

### **I AM SAYING THAT:**

- I have read (or have had read to me) the Athlete Code of Conduct.
- I agree to obey this Athlete Code of Conduct.
- I understand the wording and meaning of the Athlete Code of Conduct.
- I understand that this Athlete Code of Conduct is a general guide for my conduct and does not describe all types of good and bad behavior.
- I understand that if I do not obey with this Code of Conduct, my Program or Games Organizing Committee for National or World Games may not allow me to participate.