

**Special  
Olympics  
Pennsylvania**



# FALL 2024 Season Kickoff



# Agenda



Sport Offerings & Changes

Seasonal Calendar

Spring Site Registration and Sign-ups

Competition Events

# State Level Competition Sport Offerings - Team

- Soccer:
  - 5v5 - 16-21 year old and 22+
  - 7v7 – 16-21 year old and 22+
  - Unified 7v7 - 16-21 year old (focus age group)
  - Individuals Skills and Advanced Skills
- Volleyball
  - Traditional 22+
  - Unified Player Development
  - Individual Skills
- Flag Football:
  - Traditional 16-21 and 22+
  - Unified 16-21 (focus age group) and 22+
  - Individual Skills

There must be at least 2 teams in an age group to offer that sport at a competition.

# State Level Competition Sport Offerings - Individual

- Individual
  - Bocce: Doubles – Traditional and Unified
  - Powerlifting: Traditional
  - LDR/W: Traditional and Unified

# Sports of Emphasis

16-21, Unified Soccer & Unified Flag Football

- Recruitment focus via **Community Integration** from Unified Champion Schools

Volleyball: Unified Player Development

- Transition lower division teams into Player Development– 3 teams active in 2023 (Centre and Area M participated at Fall Fest)
- Target is 6-8 teams
- Teams identified will receive coach education and Unified partner recruitment assistance
- Goal of this program is to provide athletes with a better volleyball experience, provide better understanding of the game and improve skills and ability

# Team Sport Age Groups

## Team Sport Age Groups went into effect as of August 1, 2023

- SOPA sponsored Fall Team Sports include: Soccer, Flag Football, Volleyball
- GOAL – Teams are age and ability matched
- [Team Sport Age Group Resource](#) updated guidelines.
  - All team sports must follow these age groups: 8-11, 12-15, 16-21, 22+
  - Teams must comply to participate at Regional, Sectional or State level competition
  - SOPA will accept and review exemptions to play up or play down ONE age group.
- Fall Team Sport Age Exemption deadline is August 23

If you have questions, please contact your Regional Sport Director or Michelle Boone ([mboone@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:mboone@specialolympicspa.org)).

# SEASONS AT A GLANCE



	SPRING	FALL	WINTER
<b>Coach Site Registration</b>	Nov. 1 - Dec. 1	April 1 - May 1	August 1 - Sept. 1
<b>Athlete, Unified Partner, Volunteer Signup</b>	Dec. 15 - Jan. 15	May 15 - June 15	Sept. 15 - Oct. 15
<b>Season Length</b>	March - June	August - November	December - March
<b>Sports Offered</b>	Athletics (Track & Field), Basketball, Equestrian, Golf, Gymnastics, Softball, Swimming, Tennis	Bocce, Bowling, Flag Football, Long Distance Running/Walking, Powerlifting, Soccer, Volleyball	Alpine Skiing, Bowling, Figure Skating, Floor Hockey, Snowboard, Snowshoe, Speed Skating

# Site Registration

- Site Registration
  - OPEN April 1 – May 1
  - Head Coaches should be completing the Site Registration form: [Fall 2024 Site Registration](#)
  - Once Site Registration is received and reviewed the RSDs will send head coach their Attendance Tracker
    - This will be auto populated with sign-ups from athletes and volunteers



# Fall Sign-Ups

- **Fall Sign-Ups**

- Open May 15 – June 15
- Available on [SOPA website](#), listed by county
- IMPORTANT to get all returning athletes and volunteers to register during this time
- Share sign-up link more broadly in your community and on social media to create awareness for new athletes and volunteers.
- Everyone MUST complete sign-up to get onto a training roster

# Fall 2024 Calendar

- **Fall Calendars 2024**

- Found on SOPA Website – East, Central and West
- <https://specialolympicspa.org/sports/competitions>
- Season start date – August 9
- Season Eligibility & Age Exemptions – August 23

# Coach Certifications

## STEP 1 – Get Certified!

- **Track 1 – Skills Training School**
  - If needed contact your Regional Sport Director
- **Track 2 – Experienced Coach**
  - Must be an experienced player/coach in the sport (outside of Special Olympics): [Track 2 Application](#)

## STEP 2 – submit Practicum Hours

- **Practicum Hours**

# Coach Certifications

## STEP 2 – submit Practicum Hours

- You have 1 year from the date of the training to complete your 10 hours.
- Once you have completed ALL 10 hours complete this form: [Certified Coach Practicum Hours Form](#).
  - *Please note - you will need to enter dates and hours of coaching, so be sure to track this on your own in order to have the information necessary to complete this form.*

**UPON SUBMISSION OF THIS FORM WITH COMPLETED HOURS, YOU WILL BE A CERTIFIED COACH** (you will see your status as pending until this is submitted).

# Competitions

Share information on ALL competition events that you run with your Regional Sport Director – to include: sports, date, time and location

Season  
Start

Local program  
events/  
Invitationals

Sectional/  
Regional Events

Fall  
Festival

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOV

# State Competitions

- **Sectionals**
  - Central Fall – Sept 22, Juniata University
  - Western Fall – Sept 29, Slippery Rock
  - Eastern Fall – Oct 6, Desales University
- **State Games**
  - Fall Festival – Nov 1-3, Villanova University

[State Competitions Important Dates and Deadlines](#)

# Allocations & Advancement

- **Allocations**
  - Initial Allocations will be provided for
    - Sectionals - Bocce
- **Advancement/Qualifiers**
  - Must attend Sectionals to Qualify for Fall Festival in the following sports: Bocce, Flag Football, LDR/W, Powerlifting, Soccer and Volleyball
  - Qualifiers include Individual Skills in Team Sports
  - Advancement numbers will be shared September 20

# 2026 USA Games

- All State Level events in 2024 will be **qualifiers** for 2026 USA Games to be held in Minnesota
- We do not anticipate receiving allocations until later in 2024
- Athletes interested in participating in USA Games MUST complete this [USA Games Athlete Questionnaire](#)



SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
**USA GAMES**  
MINNESOTA 2026



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**We can accomplish more  
together than we can alone.  
- Max De Pree**

