

I N S P I R E
G R E A T N E S STM



Special Olympics
Alaska

Chapter 4

STATEWIDE
SPORTS PLAN

2006-2009 Sports Plan

Introduction

To better assist Communities, the Special Olympics Alaska Strategic Plan calls for the certification of all SO-AK Coaches. The SO-AK *Sports Plan* ensures that Special Olympics Alaska offers the highest quality of training and competition opportunities for athletes. This document identifies the SO-AK coaching structure and provides a framework for communication regarding the *Sport Plan*.

SO-AK athletes are performing in more sports and at higher levels than ever before. Much of this success can be attributed to the quality of coaches. Coaches provide the sports skills and spirit that when instilled define a true athlete. The coach is a role model and character builder. Coaches give athletes the most immediate awareness of their self worth, ability, courage and capacity to grow and improve.

Goal

Special Olympics Alaska's Coaches' Education System (CES) and Coaching Structure ensures that all SO-AK athletes receive quality coaching. Special Olympics Alaska's goal is to provide the safest and best sports training and competition experience. This is not only good practice but is necessary to meet the accreditation requirements of Special Olympics, Inc.

Special Olympics Alaska will identify one Sports Commissioner for each of its 16 sports and will develop sports partnerships with sports associations across the state. Working with the communities, SO-AK will help identify Head Coaches for each sport that the community offers. Training and support will be provided to Head Coaches as identified by the Sports Commissioner. SO-AK Athlete Center and Campus will be the site of Head Coach training and certification.

Structure

The Sports Plan calls for

Sport Commissioners – one per sport (16), supports a sport statewide

Head Coaches – one per sport that the community offers, supports sport in the community

Coaches – one per team that the community supports, provide coaches athletes

Sport Commissioner:

With statewide responsibilities, the Sport Commissioner works with the Sports Manager and Special Olympics Alaska staff to develop and support coaches in Alaska for one of sixteen sports managed by Special Olympics Alaska under the guidelines of Special Olympics, Incorporated.

Qualifications

The successful candidate must be experienced with sports program development, sports training, and program management; must possess good communication and organizational skills; and must be supportive of the Special Olympics Alaska mission, philosophy and general sports rules.

Responsibilities include

- 'Y' Assist Sports Manager in identifying and recruiting coaches around the state.
- 'Y' Work directly with SO-AK staff and Sports Manager to develop statewide sports plan.
- 'Y' Attend state games and be available for oversight of rules enforcement, challenges and protests.
- 'Y' Ensure all SO-AK coaches adhere to coaching standards set forth by Special Olympics Incorporated.
- 'Y' Identify statewide coaches' needs and develop coaching training calendar.
- 'Y' Conduct sports clinics and meetings.
- 'Y' Ensure compliance to the rules, policies and standards of SO-AK.
- 'Y' Ensure all health and safety guidelines related to sports training are followed.
- 'Y' Advise and assist local programs in recruiting coaches, establishing and conducting local level training and/or invitational competitions.
- 'Y' Evaluate sports program planning and implementation processes annually.

Head Coach:

As a key member of SO-AK, the role of Head Coach is critical in the overall development and advancement of the athletes. The Head Coach is responsible for developing and implementing sport skills training as well as competitive opportunities for athletes in the community. If there are multiple teams for the same sport in the community, the Head Coach will ensure that all teams are equally supported. Depending upon the number of athletes and community level coaches available, the Head Coach may or may not coach athletes directly.

Qualifications

The successful candidate must be experienced with sports program development, team administration, sports training, and program management; must possess good communication and organizational skills; and must be supportive of the Special Olympics Alaska mission, philosophy and general sports rules.

Responsibilities include:

- 'Y' Reports directly to their Community director.
- 'Y' Work with the Community Director to oversee their sport's program in their community.
- 'Y' Help the Sport Commissioner to identify training needs and to arrange training for coaches in their community.

- ƴ Assists the Community Director in preparing and staging local competitions.
- ƴ Recruits and trains community and assistant coaches under SO-AK guidelines.
- ƴ Collaborates with the Community Director to create a sports plan and budget.
- ƴ Must maintain SO-AK certification in their respective sport.
- ƴ Is evaluated annually by the Community Director and Sport Commissioner and Sports Manager.

Coach (and assistant coaches where needed):

Coaches play a unique and indispensable role in Special Olympics around the world. Coaches provide the sports skills and spirit that define a true athlete. In addition, coaches are role models and character builders. Coaches give Special Olympics athletes the most immediate awareness of their own worth, ability, courage and capacity to grow and improve.

Special Olympics coaches:

- ƴ Help to recruit athletes and assistant coaches.
- ƴ Assist athletes in learning sports skills and applying them in competitions.
- ƴ Encourage confidence and self-esteem through sport.

Eligibility and Selection Process

Coaching terms are two years; however there is no limit as to the number of terms a Coach may serve. The applications will be reviewed by the Sports Manager, Sport Commissioner, and the Community Director. Considerations for selection include:

1. Experience – personal sport involvement, years coaching, etc.
2. Education – coaching classes/workshops attended
3. Certification Status – current and past certifications
4. Community Involvement – activities which demonstrate commitment to the community
5. Commitment to Special Olympics Alaska – activities which suggest a long term commitment and sense of responsibility to the mission of SO-AK
6. Experience in working with individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Education/Certification

All current Head Coaches will remain in their positions for the immediate future. SO-AK will gradually implement the new selection procedures, beginning with the winter sports. All potential Head Coaches will be asked to complete the SO-AK application process. Upon approval all Head Coaches will be certified through the SO-AK Athlete Center and Campus.

Coaches' Education System (CES)

Coaching Education Curriculum

The key to improving athlete performance and well being is based on the quality of training and experiences provided by the Special Olympics coach. The Special Olympics Coaches Education System identifies basic standards and competencies necessary and essential for being a Special Olympics coach.

The current Special Olympics Coaches Education System was developed to meet the needs of both new and experienced coaches. The training program features two tracks, one for the sport-qualified but non-Special Olympics experienced individual, the other for the non-sport qualified and non-Special Olympics experienced individual.

Υ General Orientation Course

The General Orientation is a basic introduction to Special Olympics. It covers the Special Olympics mission and philosophy, organizational history and structure, intellectual disabilities and eligibility, and sports opportunities, initiatives and rules. The General Orientation is necessary for all who are interested in working with Special Olympics athletes.

Track 1: The non-sport qualified/non-Special Olympics experienced candidate track

The non-sport qualified/non-Special Olympics experienced candidate track offers a variety of additional training opportunities. After each one of the courses, coaches complete 10 hours of practical experience in working with Special Olympics athletes in order to complete certification.

Υ Skills Course

The Skills Course is offered in each of the 26 Special Olympics sports and focuses on the basic skills and strategies of the sport. It provides an application of the Special Olympics mission and philosophy in a sport-specific way. The Skills Course includes a classroom session, an activity session performing the skills with the lead trainers, and a model training session with athletes.

Υ Principles of Coaching Course

The Principles of Coaching Course is non-sport-specific. It addresses the basic principles of coaching, coaching philosophy, planning and coaching administration, fitness and conditioning, and safety and risk management.

Υ Tactics Course

The Tactics Course is sport-specific and focuses on development of higher-level sport skills, game or event tactics and strategies, expanded skill instruction and athlete performance enhancement.

Υ Comprehensive Mentoring

In this course, a coach works with and is mentored by an experienced Special Olympics or mainstream coach. The coach who is being trained participates in a variety of opportunities, such as staff briefings, practice sessions, weight training sessions, competitions, etc.

Track 2: The sport-qualified but non-Special Olympics experienced coaches-to-be track

The sport-qualified but non-Special Olympics experienced coaches-to-be track includes 20 hours of practical experience working with Special Olympics athletes in order to complete certification.

Y Coaching Special Olympics Athletes

This course focuses on what a sport-qualified person needs to know about the athlete, added responsibilities of the coach, training the athlete and preparing the athlete for competition. A practical component in working with Special Olympics athletes under the supervision and guidance of a lead trainer also is offered.

Additional Training

Coaches are encouraged and recognized for participating in other approved non-Special Olympics coaches education that includes, but is not limited to, first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, rules updates, managing athlete behavior and protective behavior, national governing body courses, training updates, etc.

2006-2009 Sports Plan Summary

The SO-AK 2006-2009 Sports Plan will improve the experiences for our athletes. The plan supports every coach for every sport in SO-AK. Working together we will continue to improve the quality of sport experiences for every SO-AK athlete in Alaska.