



Program Update

August, 2006

Soccer at Fall Championships

The 2006 Fall Championships soccer competition will be a little bit different this year. Five-a-side soccer will be for traditional teams only. Seven-a-side soccer will be for both traditional and unified teams. An attempt will be made to keep traditional and unified teams separate, but this may not be feasible due to the ages and ability levels of the teams.

For more information contact Brooke Maloy at 804-726-3029, 800-932-4653 ext. 3029 or bmaloy@specialolympicsva.org.

Bocce Demonstration at Fall Championships

Bocce is a growing sport in SOVA. A bocce demonstration will be held as part of the Fall Championships in Virginia Beach. Areas that submitted a bocce RTP in 2006 will be invited to register two-person teams for the bocce demonstration. More information will be available soon.

If you would like assistance in starting a bocce program, please contact Daniel Leake or Jennifer Gordon at dleake@specialolympicsva.org, jgordon@specialolympicsva.org or 800-526-6133.

Golf Rule Changes

Special Olympics, Inc. changed the golf rules in order to set minimum criteria for athletes to achieve before moving up to higher levels of play. In order for an athlete to compete in Levels 2-5, he/she must have completed an Individual Skills Test with a total score of at least 60 points.

In addition, the athlete must score 10 points or more in at least four out of the six skills, with one of the four scores of 10 being in either the wood or iron shot. The athlete must also achieve a minimum of five points in the two skills that total less than 10.

This new criteria will not be enforced for SOVA golf competitions in 2006, but will be enforced in 2007. For more information please contact Brooke Maloy.

Sports Conference at EMU a Huge Success

New and veteran volunteers enjoyed a great weekend in the valley learning more about Special Olympics and becoming certified coaches. The setting was idyllic with all facilities in easy walking distance, beautiful weather and great food. The courses were informative and there was plenty of time to talk with staff and volunteers informally.

Next summer a large conference will be held with sessions geared towards coaches and council members. The date and location will not be set until late fall. Please encourage volunteers to attend. Even veteran volunteers will learn a lot and have a fun weekend.

2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games

The 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games will be held in Shanghai, the People's Republic of China on October 2 – 11. The event will mark the first time the World Summer Games

will be held in Asia, and only the second time they will be held outside the United States.

The SOVA athletes who will compete in the 2007 World Games were randomly drawn from all gold medal winners at Summer Games. The athletes representing Virginia are:

Golf, Female, Level 4/5: Grace Anne Braxton, Area 11

Tennis, Div. 1: Jon Fried, Area 3

Bowling, Female: Melanie Norris, Area 2

Aquatics, Male, Category 2: Peter Zaino, Area 6

Aquatics, Female, Category 3: Sarah Garvin, Area 11

Athletics, Male, Category 2: Joey Goodrich, Area 9

Athletics, Female, Category 1: Evelyn Maguire, Area 26

Powerlifting, Male: Sterling Grooms, Area 13

Class A Volunteer Forms

This year all head and assistant coaches of fall sports must undergo a background check and be approved as Class A Volunteers. Screening unified partners and chaperones for Fall Championships is still optional, but Areas are welcome to screen these individuals if they wish. For more information or to receive a list of approved Class A Volunteers, contact Deirdre Ownby at downby@specialolympicsva.org, 800-932-4653 ext. 3030 or Val Reinford at vreinford@specialolympicsva.org, 800-932-4653 ext. 3036.

Raffle Regulations

SOVA staff and volunteers must abide by the Department of Charitable Gaming (DCG) regulations established by the state legislature. SOVA conducts raffles throughout the year and exceeds a threshold set by these regulations. Once this threshold is reached, **ALL** raffles for that organization are strictly regulated (even the smallest of raffles!). This means that all raffles at the Area and Local levels must be approved by the DCG prior to raffle tickets being printed. It can

take up to 30 days for a raffle application to be approved.

There are also strict regulations on accounting for all raffle tickets and depositing raffle ticket money in SOVA's gaming account. If you plan to conduct a raffle, please contact Kim D'Errico at kderrico@specialolympicsva.org or 800-932-4653 ext. 3038 more than 30 days prior to when you wish to print raffle tickets.

Farm Bureau Sponsors Area Volunteer of the Year Awards

In order to receive Farm Bureau scholarships for Summer Games, each Area must nominate at least one volunteer or coach of the year. Nomination forms will be distributed in September and be due in November. An awards celebration recognizing the Volunteer or Coach of the Year from each Area will be held in April. SOVA's Volunteer of the Year at the Area Level and Coach of the Year will be selected from the 26 volunteers recognized by Farm Bureau.

More information and nomination forms will be available soon. If you have questions, contact Dave Pawlowski at 800-932-4653 ext. 3034 or dpawlowski@specialolympicava.org.

Insurance Information

Trying to understand SOVA's insurance coverage can be confusing. Attachment 1 is a summary of SOVA's insurance coverage as it pertains to athletes and volunteers. Please contact Val Reinford if you have questions.

Athlete/Volunteer Dating Policy

Special Olympics strives to provide a safe environment for all athletes and volunteers. Towards that end, Special Olympics Virginia adopted the athlete/volunteer dating policy below. The policy expressly prohibits volunteers from dating athletes.

Special Olympics Virginia staff members and volunteers (excluding spouses of athletes and athletes who are Class B volunteers) are prohibited from dating or having sexual relationships with any Special Olympics athlete.

- In the event that SOVA learns of any dating or sexual relations, the staff member or volunteer must immediately end his or her association with the Special Olympics Virginia athlete or the association between the staff member or volunteer and SOVA will be terminated.
- In the case of a Special Olympics Virginia athlete who is also a staff member or a Class A volunteer, the President of SOVA will evaluate the circumstances on a case-by-case basis and determine if an authority relationship exists between the staff/volunteer athlete and the competing athlete.

Advancement Criteria

Area and Local programs are reminded that they must adhere to SOI's advancement criteria, as outlined in Attachment 2, when selecting athletes to compete in state games. Please contact your Section Director if you have any questions.

Attachment 1

Special Olympics Virginia Insurance and Risk Management Summary for Volunteers

General Liability Coverage

The general liability coverage protects insured Special Olympics organizations, athletes and registered volunteers from third-party claims of bodily injury, property damage and personal and advertising injury due to alleged negligence arising from the conduct of a Special Olympics activity by Special Olympics. Under the policy, the insurer has a “duty to defend” until such time as legal liability has been established, and therefore, defense costs associated with the aforementioned general liability claims are paid regardless of legal liability.

In addition, the general liability policy has been endorsed to provide coverage for losses resulting from damage to property in the care, custody or control of Special Olympics, excluding watercraft, aircraft, autos and Special Olympics owned property. The loss must occur during a Special Olympics conducted/sponsored event and Special Olympics must be found legally liable for the loss. The limit of liability is \$100,000 subject to a \$2,500 deductible per claim.

Athletes

- Participants are not considered registered athletes in the program and covered by insurance until they submit valid release and participation forms.
- Athletes are covered by SOVA’s general liability policy.
- Athletes are covered by SOVA’s secondary accident medical policy. This policy does not cover illnesses and only responds when injuries resulting from an accident occur during a Special Olympics event or during travel to and from the event. Injuries that occur due to an accident where epilepsy or a seizure may be a contributing factor are covered. Athletes must file claims with their personal medical insurance company before filing a claim with SOVA’s accident insurance policy. Coverage limits range from \$1,250 - \$5,000.

Volunteers

- Individuals are not considered registered volunteers until they complete a Class A or Class B Volunteer Registration Form and meet all eligibility requirements to be accepted as a SOVA volunteer.
- Volunteers are covered by SOVA’s general liability policy.
- Volunteers are covered by SOVA’s secondary accident medical policy. This policy does not cover illnesses and only responds when injuries resulting from an accident occur during a Special Olympics event or during travel to and from the event. Injuries that occur due to an accident where epilepsy or a seizure may be a contributing factor are covered. Volunteers must file claims with their personal medical insurance company before filing a claim with SOVA’s accident insurance policy. Coverage limits range from \$1,250 - \$5,000.
- State registered medical/health professionals, other than doctors, acting in the capacity of a SOVA registered volunteer are covered by SOVA’s insurance for medical malpractice claims for medical services rendered at Special Olympics events. Commercial medical service firms volunteering the services of their paid employees are not covered.
- Medical malpractice coverage for Healthy Athletes physicians is provided under a separate policy.

Coaches

- Coaches should have an emergency response plan in the case of a serious injury. Things to consider are the site address, who will call 911, who will supervise the non-injured athletes, who will assist the injured person(s), who will meet the ambulance, who will accompany the athlete/volunteer to the hospital and who will call the parents or emergency contact of the injured person.
- All facility problems should be put in writing and given to the facility supervisor. Ask for repairs if necessary.

Contracts

- Volunteers cannot sign contracts on behalf of Special Olympics Virginia. All contracts must be forwarded to SOVA staff to be reviewed and executed.

Situations Requiring Special Insurance Coverage

Some activities have special provisions in order for Special Olympics' insurance to cover. Call a SOVA staff member for additional information.

- Special Events - Year-round fundraising activities are considered special events. An example is bingo.
- Liquor Liability – If alcohol is being served/sold at an event, contact a SOVA staff member to determine if liquor liability coverage is needed.
- Fireworks – The entity providing the fireworks must light the fireworks. The company should add SOVA as an additional insured.
- Rock Walls and Inflatables – These items must be setup and operated by the supplier. SOVA must be added as an additional insured to the company's policy.
- Construction – We have no coverage for constructing buildings or putting together bleachers.
- Abuse/Molestation – The abuser is not covered by our insurance, but SOVA is covered. If a second occurrence happens and we know that the first act occurred, SOVA is not covered by American Specialty. If we have no knowledge of the first occurrence SOVA would be covered.

Vehicles

- SOVA provides secondary liability coverage when Class A Volunteers drive rented, borrowed or personal autos on behalf of Special Olympics. However, there is no secondary coverage for uninsured/underinsured motorists when driving personal vehicles.
- Coverage is provided for physical damage claims when driving "commercially rented" vehicles on behalf of SOVA. Vehicles must be rented from a company whose primary commercial purpose is renting vehicles for profit (Enterprise, Avis, Autorent, etc.). There is a \$1,000 deductible.
- Write "Special Olympics" on all rental car agreements when the vehicle will be used solely for SOVA purposes and is driven by a Class A Volunteer.
- When using golf carts or gators, make sure volunteers are trained in their use and limit who can use these vehicles.

Fundraising

- General liability coverage does not apply to fundraising participants. For example, the runners in a 5K run are not covered by SOVA's insurance. However, the volunteers handing out water are covered.
- The exception is Law Enforcement Torch Run volunteers who are running a leg of the torch run.
- Use the attached Event Flowchart to determine insurance needs for fundraising events.
- Best Practice documents that detail how to reduce SOVA's liability exist for Tip-A-Cop, Car Show, Golf Ball Drop, Truck Convoy, Poker Run, Run/Walk, Golf Cart Use, Fire Truck Pull, Billboard Sit, Polar Bear Plunge, Car Wash, Food Preparation and Dunk Tanks.

Attachment 2

SOI's Criteria for Advancement to Higher Level Competition

This information is extracted from the **Official Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules**.

Introduction: The criteria for athlete advancement, along with the divisioning procedures, are considered two of the most critical elements of Special Olympics and serve to distinguish it from virtually every other sport organization in the world. Adherence to the fundamental principles of athlete advancement is essential for the consistent implementation and development of Special Olympics Programs world-wide.

Fundamental Principles

1. Athletes of all ability levels have an equal opportunity to advance to the next higher level competition.
2. Each competition reflects all aspects of the previous competition, including but not limited to the age, gender and ability level of athletes and the variety of sports events competed in at the previous competition.

Eligibility for Advancement: An athlete is eligible to advance to the next competition provided she or he has:

1. Participated in an organized training program for at least eight consecutive weeks with opportunities to compete and practice during that period.
2. Participated in the previous competition with the following exceptions.
 - When the Games or Tournament is the first competition opportunity for an athlete, previous competition experience is not required (e.g. SOVA Alpine Skiing Championships).
 - A team for which there has been no competition opportunity at a Tournament or Games shall be eligible to advance to the next competition (e.g. a very low skilled basketball team does not have another team at its level to play).

Procedure for Athlete and Team Selection

1. Determine quota to be filled.
2. Identify the number of athletes or teams eligible for advancement.
3. If the number of eligible athletes or teams does not exceed the quota, all athletes and teams shall advance.
4. If the number of eligible athletes or teams exceeds the quota, athletes or teams that advance shall be selected as follows:

- Priority is given to first place finishers from all divisions of the sports/event. If the number of first place finishers exceeds the quota, select athletes or teams to advance by random draw.
 - If there are not enough first place finishers to fill the quota, all first place finishers advance. The remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of second place finishers from all divisions of the sports/event.
 - If the quota is large enough for all second place finishers to advance, the remaining quota shall be filled by a random draw of third place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event.
 - Repeat this process, adding each place of finish as necessary, until the quota is filled.
5. These procedures apply to both individual and team sports.
 6. An athlete shall not be barred from advancement based on prior competition experience (e.g., an athlete shall not be prohibited from advancing to Summer Games solely on the basis that she or he attends Summer Games in the past).

Additional Guidelines

1. The son or daughter of a coach, chaperone or Council Member cannot automatically advance to the next higher level of competition. Children of volunteers must go through the same random draw process as all other athletes.
2. Just as SOVA divides quotas among Areas based on athlete participation numbers, Areas may divide their quota among locals based on athlete participation numbers to insure that all segments of the Area are represented at the next higher level of competition. If the quota is not large enough to allow all local programs to advance, a random draw or the results of an Area-wide competition should be used to determine which local programs will receive a quota in any given sport.
3. Areas may also divide the quota based on ability levels, gender or age as long as all decisions are fair and representative of the athletes training. For example, if an Area has ten bowlers and eight are male and two are female, the Area could decide that 80% of the athletes who advance will be males and 20% will be females.
4. Areas may consider the behavior, medical needs and supervision requirements of athletes in determining which athletes are eligible to advance to the next higher level of competition. Areas should deem an athlete intelligible for statewide competitions for the following reasons.
 - Behavior exhibited by the athlete would render the Area coaching staff unable to meet the athlete's needs.
 - The athlete would be unable to travel overnight without parental/guardian supervision and the parent/guardian is unable to attend the event.
 - The parent/guardian wishes to exclude an athlete from being eligible for advancement.