



ATHLETE REGISTRATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SOSC POLICY ON ATHLETE PARTICIPATION

In order to participate in Special Olympics Southern California (SOSC) programs, all athletes must meet Special Olympics eligibility requirements and be properly registered. This includes having a valid Application for Participation in Special Olympics (medical form) and Official on file with the SOSC program. Any local, Area or Regional SOSC program that allows an athlete to participate without proper registration is subject to immediate suspension of all activity. Any Special Olympics coach who allows an athlete who is not registered to participate is subject to immediate suspension and possible dismissal from SOSC activities.

ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY: Every person with Intellectual Disabilities who is at least eight (8) years of age is eligible to participate in Special Olympics competition.

Age Requirements: There is no maximum age limitation in Special Olympics. The minimum age requirement for participation in SOSC competition is eight years of age. SOSC permits children who are at least six years old to participate in age-appropriate sports training programs. Children with intellectual disabilities ages two through seven can take part through School Partnership Programs or the Young Athletes program, either at home or through a nearby Special Olympics program. People without intellectual disabilities can take part in Unified Sports®, teams that mix people with and without intellectual disabilities.

Degree of Disability: Participation in SOSC training and competition is open to all persons with Intellectual Disabilities who meet the minimum age requirements regardless of the level or degree of that person's disability, and whether or not that person also has other mental or physical disabilities, so long as that person registers to participate in SOSC.

Identifying Persons with Intellectual Disabilities: A person is considered to have Intellectual Disabilities for purposes of determining his or her eligibility to participate in SOSC if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements:

1. The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having Intellectual Disabilities as determined by their localities; or
2. The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligent quotient or "IQ" testing or other measures which are generally accepted within the professional community as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay; or
3. The person has a closely related developmental disability. A "closely related developmental disability" means having functional limitations in both general learning (such as IQ) and in adaptive skills (such as recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care). However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral, or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate in SOSC.

ATHLETE REGISTRATION FORMS: Described below, must be completed in their entirety in order to be accepted as "valid".

Application for Participation in Special Olympics (Medical Form) – Required for all athletes and valid for a period of three (3) years from the date of the examiner's signature (located in Section C). Includes three sections:

Section A includes important personal and contact information for the athlete, parent/guardian, and emergency contact. Section A will normally be completed by an adult athlete or the athlete's parent/guardian.

Section B includes athlete health information such as a medical history, current list of medications, and signatures.

Section C includes a physical examination (Medical Certification) that must be performed by a licensed medical examiner (physician, physician assistant, or chiropractor is acceptable by SOSC). Must include examiner's contact information, signature and date.

Athlete Release Form – Required for all athletes, valid for lifetime. This form authorizes SOSC to respond and treat minor medical emergencies, as well as use the athlete's picture, voice and/or likeness in media used to promote SOSC.

An adult athlete (over 18 yrs. of age at the time of application) must complete and sign the "Release to be Completed by the Adult Athlete" section. This section must be reviewed and explained to the adult athlete by another adult. This person must print his/her name and indicate their relationship to the athlete, thereby confirming that they have reviewed the information with the athlete.

A minor athlete (under 18 yrs. of age) must have the "Release to be Completed by Parent or Guardian of Minor" section signed by their parent or guardian. Release must be signed by parent/guardian.

If an athlete, parent or guardian does not grant permission for the use of the athlete's likeness, name, voice, etc. for the purposes stated, they may draw a single line through the statement and initial the section.

If there are Religious Objections to any provisions, please complete the **Special Provisions Regarding Medical Treatment** form, as well as the **Official Special Olympics Release** form, crossing out and initialing any objectionable provisions.

Medical Release for Athletes with Down Syndrome Participating in Restricted Sports as Part of Special Olympics Southern California – Valid for lifetime and required for those individuals with Down Syndrome expected to compete in the following sports: Butterfly stroke (Aquatics), Diving Start (Aquatics), Gymnastics, High Jump (Athletics), Pentathlon (Athletics), and Soccer (Football). This form must be completed by the examining physician. The examination must include x-ray views of full extension and flexion of the neck.

ATHLETE PRIVACY & INFORMATION SECURITY: All SOSC staff is responsible for protecting the privacy of our athletes by ensuring that the information on the Athlete Registration Forms is kept secure. Therefore:

The original copies of all Athlete Registration forms must be stored in locked file cabinets, in any program office responsible for collecting and storing the forms.

Access to athlete information, both in hard copy and digital form, is restricted only to SOSC staff and registered Class A volunteers who have met all Class A registration and background screening requirements, on a need to know basis.

Athlete information may not be distributed nor sold to any outside parties under any circumstances.

COMPLETING THE ATHLETE REGISTRATION PROCESS: Regional staff and Area Directors are responsible for ensuring the completion of the athlete registration process for each athlete. Following are the steps required for athlete registration:

1. New or updated Athlete registration forms must be turned in directly to the Regional Staff or Area Director. Originals only; no copies or faxes accepted.
2. Regional staff or Area Director must verify the completion of the forms before they can be accepted. If forms are incomplete in any way they are not valid. Staff must initial in designated area (on forms) that form was received and has been checked for validity. Complete, valid forms are then mailed to the designated Headquarters Staff.
3. Once the Chapter Database Coordinator receives the forms, a confirmation email will be sent to the Region/Area. Athlete information will be entered/updated in the GMS Database by the designated Headquarters Staff.
4. Forms will be scanned and attached to athlete entry in GMS by the designated Headquarters Staff.
5. Once the athlete's record has been updated (within 3 days from the date the forms were received), the Regions/Areas will then distribute copies of athlete registration forms to the head coach for each sport, during each sport season.
6. **Please note:** Athlete registration forms should NOT be scanned or faxed to SOSC Chapter office. Only originals will be accepted.

RENEWING AND UPDATING: Ensuring valid medicals is an important step in keeping our sports training and competition events safe.

Effective immediately, the updated ***Application for Participation in Special Olympics, Athlete Release Form***, and ***Medical Release for Athletes with Down Syndrome Participating in Restricted Sports as Part of Special Olympics Southern California*** must be used.

Previous versions of these forms will be not be accepted and will be returned to the Regions/Areas if sent into the designated Headquarters Staff.

Athletes with lifetime *Athlete Release Forms* are required to update their *Application for Participation in Special Olympics* at least once every three years from the date of the physician's signature (in Section C). *Application for Participation in Special Olympics* are not lifetime forms.

Regional staff and Area Directors will notify athletes of their expiring registration forms at least 90 days prior to the expiration date. Renewed and updated registration forms must follow the outlined registration process (above).

RECORD KEEPING: To ensure SOSC is meeting risk management policies and preserving historical data, all expired athlete registration forms must be retained for at least three (3) years from the form expiration date. After the three-year archived period, forms can be shredded and disposed of properly.



New/Renewal Athlete Medical Form Workflow

