Coach Education Program

Online *Equestrian* Sport Certification
Coach Education Program

*If you have not already done so, please complete the following Class A Certification Process at: http://soky.org/coachcertification/ prior to completing this Sport Certification Training

- Become a Class A Volunteer
- Complete and Submit Class “A” Volunteer Application.
  *Required every three years*
- Complete the online Volunteer Orientation Training and submit its quiz.
  *Only required once during continued involvement with SOKY*
- Complete the online Special Olympics International Protective Behaviors course.
  *Required every three years for those over the age of 18*
- Complete the online CDC’s “Heads Up” Concussion Training for SOKY and submit its quiz.
  *Required every three years for those over the age of 18*
Equestrian Sport Certification

• This training will cover Special Olympics Kentucky Equestrian events, rules, competitions, the divisioning and registration process, along with any additional equestrian resources and other general information.

• The online Equestrian Sport Certification training is required for SOKY coaches who like to become sport certified and is part of the criteria to be eligible to attend both USA and World Games. The training is also for those coaches and/or volunteers that would just like to learn more information about Special Olympics Kentucky as a whole and specifically its Equestrian program.
Coaching Special Olympics Athletes prepares Special Olympics coaches to use their sport-specific knowledge in coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities. This course meets the Special Olympics standards and competencies for coach certification. For veteran Special Olympics coaches, this course serves as a reminder of the essentials sometimes forgotten after years of coaching. For new Special Olympics coaches, this course will help prepare you for your first role in coaching Special Olympics athletes.
The better the coach ... 

the better the experiences ... 

the better the athlete!
I COACH BECAUSE...

Please take a minute to watch this “I Coach Because Clip” created by Special Olympics New Jersey

I COACH BECAUSE CLIP
Course Overview

Unit 1: The Athlete
Unit 2: Teaching & Training
Unit 3: Preparing & Coaching During Competition
Unit 4: Managing the Program
Unit 5: Additional Coach Information
Unit 6: SOKY Equestrian Specifics
Unit 1 – The Athlete Overview

• Psychological Issues or Learning Issues
• Medical Issues
• Social Issues
Motivation – helping athletes maintain interest

- May have shorter attention span; harder to keep independently “on task”.
- May be motivated more by short-term rather than long-term goals.
- May learn better with more frequent positive reinforcement

Perception – helping athletes understand the sport in which they are participating

- May have difficulty focusing attention on the appropriate object or task
- May have impairments in sight or hearing
Unit 1 – Psychological Issues & Considerations (Cont.)

**Comprehension**—helping athletes remember and perform the skill they have learned (understanding)

- May find it difficult to understand verbal explanations of new skills. Often find it easier to learn through visual demonstrations and physical prompts.
- May have difficulty in understanding complex, multi-part actions or explanations.
- Often take a longer time between learning one piece of information and the next (learning plateau).
- Less able to generalize skills learned in one situation to a different situation.

**Memory**

- May need frequent repetition and reminders in order to remember concept or skill
# Unit 1 – Psychological Challenges

*Each psychological item has its challenge and action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Item</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Easily distracted by noise</td>
<td>Control surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>History of neglect &amp; negative reinforcement, feeling of failure</td>
<td>Focus on positive, appropriate reinforcement, catch the athlete doing well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Difficulty applying skills in different environments</td>
<td>Practice in different settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Difficulty learning through verbal explanation only</td>
<td>Add demonstrations and/or physical manipulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Down Syndrome

- Approximately 10% of individuals with Down Syndrome have a condition called atlantoaxial instability, which is a mal-alignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition may cause possible injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.

- Prohibited sports – equestrian, gymnastics, diving, pentathlon, butterfly and dive starts in swimming, high jump, alpine/snowboarding, squat lift and soccer.

Medications

- Understand the physical side effects of an athlete’s medication

- Very important to know the medications athletes are taking
Seizures

• Incidents tend to be higher with Special Olympics athletes
• Athlete safety to minimize the adverse effects of a seizure

Physical Disabilities

• Some athletes also have physical disabilities which may affect the sports they can participate in or the methods of teaching a coach must use. Special Olympics has events for individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers or other assistance.
  *EQUESTRIAN IS AN ASSISTED SPORT*
• Muscle strength may be needed for particular sports and some athletes may not have the strength for those sports. This is often due to lack of use rather than a permanent disability.
**Autism**

- 20% of athletes exhibit one or more of the autism spectrum disorders
- Over stimulate

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**

- These athletes consistently function better on performance tasks compared with verbal tasks. The more concrete the task, the better the performance.
- Tend to have more verbal comprehension skills, despite being comfortable and chatty around people. These athletes will also tend to have attention and memory deficits and often display poor judgement in distinguishing right from wrong.
# Unit 1 – Medical Considerations for each action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>See the challenge that correlates with the appropriate action.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Down Syndrome</td>
<td>Ensure the athlete is screened for atlanto-axial instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Seizures</td>
<td>Be prepared to protect the athlete and minimize adverse effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Autism spectrum disorders</td>
<td>Control and/or block self-stimulatory behavior and set up a behavior support plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Attention deficit/hyperactivity</td>
<td>Shorten drills and provide one-to-one assistance when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Fetal alcohol syndrome</td>
<td>Provide concrete performance tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 1 – Social Considerations

**Social Skills**

• May lack basic social/adaptive skills due to a lack of opportunity or training

• May also lack communication skills and positive interaction with others

**Recreation at Home**

• Lack of physical activity

• Lack of encouragement

**Economic Status**

• May lack financial means

• May not have access to independent transportation
All of the following social consideration(s) may impact an athlete’s participation in Special Olympics:

- Inappropriate responses to social situations
- Physical inactivity being modeled
- Lack of endurance
- Lack of access to transportation

Our challenge as coaches is to develop a full understanding of our athletes and the strengths and weaknesses they bring with them to a Special Olympics program. By doing so we can begin to develop a training and competition program that they will benefit from and enjoy.
Unit 2 – Teaching & Training the Athlete
There are many ways to organize a training session for Special Olympics athletes. Because of some of the things previously identified concerning comprehension and memory, there is considerable value in developing a consistent training routine that provides familiarity, stability, and comfort.
## Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component and Details</th>
<th>Layout of Drill or Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warm-up &amp; Stretching</strong></td>
<td>Specific to the sport, repetitive and involve athletes in leading activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills Construction</strong></td>
<td>Break skills into smaller tasks, involve many athletes at a time and practice skills related to event situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competition Experience</strong></td>
<td>Scrimmage, simulate event/game situations and work towards what the competition will look like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cool-Down, Stretch, &amp; Reward</strong></td>
<td>Playing a game related to the sport and end each training with a cool down activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Warm-Up

- A warm-up should be the first physical activity in every training session or competition. It helps prepare the body and mind for the activity we are about to do. Warm-ups should begin at a slow pace and gradually become a little faster and more difficult.

- A warm-up helps us to reach a state of physical and mental readiness. When we prepare both the body and the mind, we are less likely to suffer an injury and will perform better at each practice, training and competition.
Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session: Warm-Up (Cont.)

**Physical Benefits:** A warm-up prepares the body for sport or exercise and helps to prevent injury by:

- Increasing heart rate
- Increasing breathing rate
- Increasing blood flow to the active muscles
- Increasing body and muscle temperature

**Mental Benefits:** Warm-ups prepare the mind to focus on the sport or exercise by:

- Helping athletes shift focus from life to sport
- Mentally reviewing skills previously learned
- Connecting the mind and the body (linking hand and eye coordination)
Every sport is different and each sport has specific skills and movements. The warm-up should be personalized to the sport and the ability levels of all of the athletes.

However there are some general components that should be included in all warm-ups regardless of the sport in which includes the following:

- Aerobic activity to raise heart rate
- Dynamic stretches
- Sport specific movements
- Aerobic activities are whole body movements that will increase the heart rate that may include:
  
  - Walk or jog around the field for five minutes
  - Team Dance
  - Team Game (i.e. – tag or sport specific game)
  - Build an obstacle course using the equipment and space you have for practice

- Aerobic activities should start at a slow pace and gradually increase in intensity/difficulty and last at least five minutes.
- Now that the body is warm it is time to focus on stretching the muscles you will use during your sport.

- Dynamic stretches consist of active, controlled movements that take body parts through a full range of motion.

- Sport specific dynamic stretches include:
  - Sprints
  - Agility drills
  - Balance drills

- General dynamic stretches include:
  - High knees
  - Butt kicks
  - Leg swings
  - Torso twists
  - Side stepping
  - Arm circles
Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session: 
Warm-Up Exercises – Equestrian Specific

Unmounted Exercises:
1. **Calf Stretch** – Stand on the bottom step with ball of feet on riser. Gently, with knees slightly bent, drop heel below level of step. Hold and return, then repeat.

2. **Thigh Stretch** – Place one leg at a time on a fence rail or chair (between knee and waist level) and slowly stretch upper body towards knee and then hold, then repeat.

Mounted Exercises
1. **Torso Twist (may also be done unmounted)** - While mounted, extend arms then slowly turn entire upper body until arms are parallel to the horses spine. Slowly turn back to center, then to other side.

2. **Ears and Tails** – Have athlete/rider reach forward and backward with each hand to touch horse’s ears and tail.

3. **Windmill** – Have athlete/rider extend arms and then make progressively larger circles with arms. Rotate in a forward direction and then reverse.

4. **Two Point** – With knees slightly bent and stirrups on balls of the feet, allow weight to lower heels. With hands on the horses neck, athlete/rider should be bent at the waist, keeping head and eyes up, looking straight ahead. Support upper body by placing hands halfway up the horses neck. As athlete/rider becomes more secure, try this with arms extended at a walk, then at a trot, etc.
When your training, practice or sport session is complete you should always cool down. It is as important to have a good cool-down as it is to have a good warm-up. A good cool-down allows the body to gradually return to a state of rest.

There are many purposes of a cool-down including:

- Decrease heart rate
- Decrease breathing rate
- Decrease body and muscle temperature
- Decrease muscle soreness
- Improve flexibility
- Promote relaxation
Cool-Down

- The cool-down is also a great chance for coaches to review the session, to tell athletes what to expect at the next session, and to ask for feedback from athletes. Remind your athletes they need to drink water and have a healthy snack to help recover from practice. **The Fit 5 Guide** has suggestions for healthy snacks and recommendations for proper hydration.

- Cool-down activities may include: static stretching, controlled breathing intervals and some light aerobic activity.
Unit 2 – Training Sequence

- The key is to break down skills into small tasks or steps; tasks are then put together to form skills. Use drills and activities that involve many athletes at all times. Practice skills in situations that are related to the game or event. Break skills down into small steps.

Task → Skill → Application → Competition
## Unit 2 – Training Sequence

What’s the challenge and how to fix it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Sequence Element</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Acquire ability to repeatedly demonstrate sport competencies in different situations &amp; environments</td>
<td>Provide game like drills or situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Acquire ability to perform series of sport competencies effectively and necessary to perform a sport</td>
<td>Work on essential sport competencies to perform the sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Acquire ability to put essential sport competencies into practice</td>
<td>Provide scrimmage opportunities in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>Acquire ability to perform essential sport competencies</td>
<td>Break essential sport competencies down into individual parts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication is key to immediately reinforcing desired behavior. There are several key words that begin with a “C” which address what a coach should say:

- CONCISE
- CONSISTENT
- CLEAR
- COMMAND-ORIENTED
- CONCRETE
## Unit 2 – Communication (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sport Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concise</td>
<td>Use a few key words that cue a desired action</td>
<td>“Go to the free throw line” Showing an athlete where to stand on defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Use the same word or phrase for the same action</td>
<td>Coach constantly say “Breathe” – teaching an athlete when to take a breath in swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Use easy to understand words that have one meaning</td>
<td>“Swing the bat” teaching how/when to swing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command-Oriented</td>
<td>Use words that elicit or reinforce a desired action</td>
<td>“On your mark. Set. Go.” Using this phrase for starts in athletics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Connect words to something defined or tangible</td>
<td>“Jump forward” when coaching an athlete in the long jump.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 2 – Levels of Assistance or Instruction

- It is important to use the appropriate level of instruction and assistance.
  - A lower ability athlete may require more assistance
  - Verbal cues should always be accompanied by demonstration
  - Partial physical assistance may be needed to properly position the athlete
  - When all else fails take the athlete through the complete motion
## Unit 2 – Levels of Assistance or Instruction (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Instruction or Assistance</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sport Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Physical Assistance</td>
<td>Help the athlete through the entire motion of the skill</td>
<td>Softball: coach makes an adjustment to the athlete’s arm motion when throwing the ball by moving the athlete’s arm through the entire throwing movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>Tell the athlete what to do</td>
<td>Footwork: “run forward to the line; then return, running backward”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>Show the athlete the proper technique</td>
<td>Soccer: one athlete shoots on goal while another watches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Physical Assistance</td>
<td>Place the athlete’s hands in the proper position</td>
<td>Golf: coach physically adjusts the athlete’s hands on the golf club with the correct grip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- The goal is for coaches to meet each athlete where he/she is and treat him/her accordingly.

- However, a coach may often have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic ... not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

- When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior, the inappropriate behavior may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating in the moment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athlete Behavior Characteristics</th>
<th>Strategies to Improve Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Swimmer has a short attention span** | 1. Dwell on a stroke or activity for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task  
2. Provide different opportunities for repetition and review, which is the key to gaining new skill.  
3. Work one-on-one to gain full attention. |
| **Basketball athlete yells if he/she misses a shot** | 1. Emphasize the other aspects of the game besides shooting  
2. Work on shooting drills without a hoop  
3. Begin to shoot at a hoop but in a non-game setting with a one-on-one coach |
| **Bowler doesn’t wait their turn** | 1. Have a coach at the lane help with the order of bowlers, explain whose turn it is  
2. Have the bowler wait with a coach behind the bowling area until their turn is up  
3. Emphasize the order and that the bowler will always follow the same individual |
- A key goal of Special Olympics is to provide an opportunity for all athletes to experience success in competitions.

- A Special Olympics athlete can benefit from many aspects of a competition (including meeting new people, participating in the festivities of Opening Ceremonies and other social events, the excitement of traveling to new places and staying away from home, etc.). None of these things, however, should be as important to the coach as the focus on the participation in the competition itself.

- This section highlights ways to improve the quality of an athlete’s competition experience.
Unit 3 – Preparing for Competition

Registration and Key Pre-Season Items

- Provide accurate entry and roster information along with accurate scoresheets, appropriate divisioning guidelines in which all are provided to SOKY State Office in a timely manner and by the requested due date.

- Help the specific Program Manager prepare a successful competition for your athletes by meeting the registration deadlines and by turning in accurate and up to date information.

- As a coach, know and understand all of the rules in which can then be properly taught to your athletes

- Hold preseason meeting with athletes, coaches & family members to discuss expectations of the season – set the standard and any guidelines needed.
Preparing for Equestrian Competition

As with any rider, Special Olympics athletes will make progress; some quickly and some at a slower pace. As an instructor/coach, you will be challenged to be creative at times. Here are a few suggestions:

1. If verbal instruction seems to be stalled, have an assistant demonstrate on another horse.
2. Play games to increase confidence/balance.
3. Encourage small attempts and end on a positive note.
4. With some timid athletes/riders, try to graduate from lead line to lunge line.
Unit 3 – Preparing for Competition (Cont.)

**Supervision**

Discuss the challenges associated with participating in competition away from home, and why adequate, non-coaching additional support personnel are needed (other persons).

**Transportation**

Lodging (need for same-sex supervision) [SOKY Housing Policy](#)

Social activities - [SOKY Recreational Swimming Guidelines](#)

Coaches meetings (Who will supervise athletes during these?)
Unit 3 – Preparing for Competition (Cont.)

**Travel and Overnight**

- Discuss overnight concerns with parents or group-home supervisors

- Write up a simple checklist of items to bring and distribute to athletes and parents

- Make sure that all special medication needs are understood. Coaches may have to assist with handling medications. Have all medical forms and information readily available at all times.

- Work with most effective rooming arrangements, taking into account athlete choice, behavioral and personality clashes, etc.
Guidelines for Success

- **Teach responsibility & independence:** Assist athletes in dressing appropriately (proper uniform), understanding what is happening at competition site, maintaining a focused attitude and appropriate behavior

- **Arrive Early:** Allow time for putting on uniforms, warm-up and stretching routines and time to focus on the competition

  Encourage maximum effort no matter your specific division or opponents throughout the entire competition!
Guidelines for Success

- Help athletes learn from winning & losing

  *Deal graciously and realistically with winning and losing. Focus on effort made, recognize accomplishments and new skills that were performed and taking something positive away from the experience.

- Let athletes compete without direct supervision (depending on ability or division)

  *Not running down the side of the court shouting instructions, allowing the competition officials to conduct the competition and allowing athletes to make mistakes and helping them learn from their mistakes.

IF YOU MUST PROTEST A RESULT OR OUTCOME OF AN EVENT, PLEASE DO SO IN A CALM & RESPECTFUL MANNER!
The coach can be the key person who makes any competition experience a good one.

*Please, take the time to adequately prepare for competition and plan for on-site supervision and make sure your time coaching is time well spent.
The successful Special Olympics Kentucky coach:

**Is sports and coaching knowledgeable:**
- Special Olympics Kentucky is a sport organization
- Technical knowledge of the sport and how to teach it is essential if coaches are to effectively help athletes improve their sport skills and truly benefit from Special Olympics.
- Successful coaches are constantly looking for opportunities to learn more about the sport.

**Is Special Olympics Kentucky knowledgeable:**
- Special Olympics Kentucky offered sports and modified rules to each sport
- Special Olympics Kentucky Mission Statement
- Special Olympics Kentucky Athlete and Coach Oath
- Special Olympics Kentucky Coaching Requirements (Coach Certification Process)

* A better understanding of these will benefit your athletes! *
The successful Special Olympics Kentucky coach:

**Recruits and trains assistant coaches:**
- Individualized coach-athlete teaching is key to successful training in Special Olympics.
- Assistant coaches can be recruited to help provide individualized attention.
- Assistant coaches are useful only if they are trained and coordinated at practice.
- Invites fellow co-workers or friends out to see a game or a practice in hopes they will become involved.

**Recruit and trains athletes:**
- A coach is also a promoter and recruiter; always tries to expand participation
Unit 4 – The Successful Special Olympics Coach (Cont.)

- Places athletes in correct division or ability level every season
- Puts a priority on safety
- Puts a priority on Health and Fitness & overall well-being of athletes
- Conducts high-quality training and competition
- Involves and educates families of participants
- Assists with community inclusion to improve social and communication skills of participants
Understands the proper and preferred method for wanting to communicate any feedback, suggestions, or complaints to the SOKY state office.

- NONE OF THE LISTED ITEMS ABOVE SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT OR DURING AN EVENT
- THE ITEMS ABOVE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED VIA EMAIL OR PHONE CALL BY THE HEAD COACH AND ONLY THAT PARTICULAR COACH (EMAILS SHOULD BE SHORT AND TO THE POINT)
- THE HEAD COACH SHOULD FUNNEL ALL COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE TEAM, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, ETC. THROUGH THEM PRIOR TO BRINGING IT UP TO SOKY STATE OFFICE

We understand that every coach deserves to be heard, but in order to communicate most effectively every coach should also understand the proper methods listed above! It is also very important for all family members to follow proper protocol at all events, trainings and other SOKY related functions. They must also adhere to both the family member code of conduct along with the spectator guidelines.
A Positive Sport Experience Starts With The Coach

- Coaches have the greatest opportunity to create positive change in Special Olympics athletes, because they are the ones who work with athletes on a consistent basis. Good coaches know that learning to play a sport is more than just mastering skills associated with the sport – it takes teamwork, commitment, sacrifice, and dedication. These are qualities that Special Olympics coaches work to instill in their athletes, with the understanding that these lessons can have a positive impact on the athletes’ lives outside of sports. The second reason is that it is a requirement.

- You as a Special Olympics coach are role models and character builders. Coaches help our athletes discover their physical skills, their self-worth, their human courage, and their capacity to grow. Being a Special Olympics coach is one of the most important and rewarding volunteer roles.
Responsibilities of the Special Olympics Coach

- Assist athletes in learning sports skills and applying them in competitions.
- Encourage confidence and self-esteem through sport.
- Obtain equipment for athletic training.
- Help to recruit athletes and assistant coaches.
- Register athletes for competitions.
- Know and share the mission of Special Olympics in your community.
- Most importantly HAVE FUN!
Coach Resources

- **Coach Code of Conduct**: Special Olympics Coaches are role models whose behavior should serve as a positive example for their athletes.

- **Athlete Code of Conduct**: Special Olympics Kentucky is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics.

- **Family Member Code of Conduct**: This should be emphasized during training, competition, and special events at any level.

- **Volunteer Code of Conduct**: For SOKY volunteers.

  [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)
  [Family Code of Conduct](#)
  [Athlete Code of Conduct](#)
  [Coach Code of Conduct](#)

**SOKY COACHES CORNER**
Unit 5 – Additional Information
Coaches Corner (Cont.)

Key Coaching Forms

• Accident/Incident Form: Online Version
• Certificate of Insurance: Online Version
• Athlete Medical Form: Online Version
• Class A Volunteer and Unified Partner App: Online Version
• Local Program Contact List: Online Version
• Special Olympics Logo Usage Guidelines: Online Version
• Recreational Swimming Guidelines: Online Version

All can be found on the SOKY COACHES CORNER PAGE
Special Olympics Coach Oath – “In the name of all coaches, we shall follow written and verbal instructions of Special Olympics officials at all times, have our athletes at the appropriate events and activities at the proper time and abide by the rules and policies, in the spirit of sportsmanship.”
Unit 6 – SOKY Equestrian Specifics

Important General Information

- **Main Point of Contact:** SOKY Individual Sports Program Manager
- **Fall Sport:** Season runs from August-December
- **Season Timeline:**
  - Local/Area sign-ups/tryouts take place in July/August
  - Intent to Participate Forms (registration packet) is sent out via email first of August
  - Currently no area or regional competitions
  - State Competition (August or September) and is currently being held at Lakeside Arena in Frankfort

*SOKY EQUESTRIAN SPORTS MANUAL*
GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS
HEAT, COLD AND LIGHTNING WEATHER POLICIES

Heat Guidelines
- A heat index of 95-99 degrees Fahrenheit will result in a shortened event.
- A heat index of 100 degrees Fahrenheit and above will result in a cancelled or postponed event.

Cold Guidelines
- A wind chill of 10 degrees Fahrenheit and below will result in a cancelled event.

Lightning Guidelines
- Activity may not be resumed or started for 30 minutes after both the last sound of thunder and the last flash of lightning.

General Statement
As staff of Special Olympics Kentucky, our number one priority is the safety of our athletes, volunteers and spectators. It is to be understood that all cancellations will be decided as soon as possible, and to assume the event is still on if you have not heard anything from a staff member via email and/or by phone. You may also check for updates on our website and all our social media accounts: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In advance, we greatly appreciate your cooperation with this, and ask that you abide by the policies above for both competition and practice/training.
SOKY Equestrian

- The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI) rules for equestrian found at [http://www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org). FEI or National Governing Body rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Equestrian shall apply.

Special Olympics North America Equestrian Rules

Special Olympics Kentucky Equestrian Rules
SOKY Equestrian – Introduction

- Equestrian activities are largely dependent on the kindness of the horse. There are three basic philosophies regarding horseback riding: competition, recreation, and/or therapy. While all are valuable and support each other, for this manual, the competitive aspect will be addressed.

- In the training of the athlete, the size and type of horse will depend on the physical and mental capabilities of the athlete. In general, any horse used in a lesson program or that is trustworthy with an experienced rider, is a good place to start. Breed of horse is not important UNLESS the athlete wishes to compete above the state level at which point “gaited” horses (Tennessee Walking horses, Paso Finos, Rocky Mountain, etc.) which do not perform a true walk, trot/jog and/or canter/lope, are not covered under SOI rules.

- The following is required at EVERY Special Olympics Competition:
  1. All athletes/riders are required to wear an ASTM/SEI certified helmet/headgear.
  2. All athletes/riders are required to wear hard-soled boots or shoes with a heel.
Official Events

❖ The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics. Some of the listed events below may not be currently offered by SOKY specifically.

**English Style Events**
- Dressage
- Prix Caprilli
- Equitation Jumping
- English Equitation (required as a preliminary test)
- Working Trails
- Showmanship at Halter/Bridle Classes
- Gymkhana Events: Pole Bending, Team Relays, Concepts of Riding for CS and BS riders

**Western Style Events**
- Stock Seat Equitation (required as a preliminary test)
- Western Riding
- Showmanship at Halter/Bridle Classes
- Gymkhana Events: Pole Bending, Barrel Racing, Figure 8 Stake Race, Team Relays, Concepts of Riding for CS and BS riders
- Drill Teams of twos and fours
- Unified Sports Team Relays
- Unified Sports Drill Relays
Rules of Competition

• Equestrian athletes are not separated by male-female or by age. All athletes compete according to ability.
• All riders must have had at least 10 riding training sessions within the six months prior to competition.
• Entries must be received by the event management on or before the entry deadline. No post entries will be allowed.
• No dogs will be permitted on the show grounds, except seeing eye dogs or assistance dogs.
• There will be a safety inspection of tack and equipment before riders mount.
• In cases of broken equipment or loss of a shoe during competition, the rider may continue or be excused from the ring at the request of his/her coach.
• Spotters, appointed by the event director, will remain in strategic places in the competition area to act in case of emergency for unassisted riders. Other attendants are not allowed in the competition ring except at the request of the judge(s) or when specified in the event requirements.
• Outside assistance (rail side coaching) will be penalized at the judge’s discretion. Electronic communication devices used for the purpose of communicating between riders and individuals outside the ring are prohibited.
• Cue cards may be used for hearing impaired athletes. In order for cues to be universal, they be designated as follows:
  1 = Walk, 2 = Sitting Trot/Jog, 3 = Posting Trot, 4 = Canter/Lope, 0 = Reverse, Universal Stop Sign = Halt
Rules of Competition (Cont.)

- In competitions where riders do not bring their own horses, adequate time must be set aside to determine suitability of the rider to the horse.
- In competitions where riders provide their own horses, the event director may require proof of a negative Coggins test.
- A rider must use the same horse in all events during the entire competition.
- Only two riders are allowed to compete on one horse. If two riders share one horse only one of them can be A level.
- Change of horse is only allowed for safety reasons or if a horse is sick or unsound.
- The official veterinarian’s decision, if called by the judge, as to the serviceable soundness of a horse will be final for the purpose of awarding medals and ribbons in the class for which the vet was called. Otherwise, the judge(s) and the equine director will make the final decision regarding a horse’s ability to compete.
- Unsoundness does not penalize a competitor unless it is sufficiently severe to impair the required performance. In such cases, the imposition of a penalty is at the judge’s discretion.
- In case of grievance, the event director will consult the judge(s), competition steward and/or the Equestrian Sports Development/Advisory team. Their decision will be final.
Attire

- Clothing must be workman like and neat.
- All riders must wear heeled boots. Riders who must wear footwear as the result of a physical disability must have a physician’s statement submitted with their rider profile. In this case, safety stirrups are obligatory. English tack style riders must use Peacock safety stirrups, S-shaped stirrups or Devonshire boots if unable to wear proper boots.
- All riders must wear protective SEI-ASTM or BHS approved helmets with full chin harness which must be fastened at all times when the riders are working around horses.
- Competitors must wear their assigned number prominently displayed on their backs during competition, practice at the competition and while in the competition “holding area” (stage).
- During practice, athletes must adhere to the helmet, boots and long pants rule, but may wear short-sleeved shirts without riding coats.
Tack

- Saddles must fit the horse. Appropriate equipment is provided by the competition management in agreement with the horse owner.
- An athlete may use his/her own saddle only if it fits the horse he/she is riding. If a rider plans to use his/her own saddle, it must be declared in the Rider Profile.
- Adapted and personally owned saddles must be approved by the event director and horse owner prior to the competition.
- Bridles must be appropriate to the class entered and meet the rule requirements. In International, National and Chapter competition, it is mandatory to have the bits dropped and inspected on all horses prior to competition.
- Halters are required for all supported classes. A lead line must be attached to the halter and not to the bridle. The halter may be over or under the bridle as long as it doesn’t interfere with the use of the bit or the reins.
- Riders may use adaptive equipment without penalty, but this information must be on the Rider Profile. Note: Riders may in no way be attached to the horse or saddle!
- Prohibited Tack and Equipment includes – bearing, side or running reins. Seat covers – if an athlete needs a seat cover it must declared on the rider profile. Boots and bandages, except where specifically approved as appropriate for a class. Boots may used only if the horse is always ridden with boots and the owner insists on them. Blinders and nose covers are also prohibited.
Unit 6 – SOKY Equestrian Specifics

**Judging**

- The following points (where appropriate) have equal consideration in judging all classes: rider’s balance, rider’s seat, use of aids, ability to follow directions, ring etiquette and safety along with sportsmanlike conduct.
- Results as shown by the performance of the horse are not to be considered more important than the method used in obtaining them.
- Unauthorized assistance from horse handlers and side walkers will result in penalties.
- Side walkers may not give verbal commands or extra physical prompting, except in case of emergency.
- Special consideration will be given to riders with visual or auditory impairments or severe physical disability.
- Coaches may not act as horse handlers, side walkers or spotters for their own athlete anytime while that athlete is being judged.
Divisioning

- Athletes are separated by ability into divisions of 3-8 riders.
- Support (S) – Rider needs the physical support of one or two side walkers and/or the presence of a leader. Any help in the arena is considered “supported”.
- Independent (I) – Independent riders may not be helped while competing.
- Division Levels:
  1. **A Level**: Walk, Trot/Jog, Canter/Lope. Independent only. Rider is expected to compete with no modifications to NGB rules. Can perform any class requirements.
  2. **B Level**: Walk, Trot/Jog. BI – Independent, can perform any class requirements. BS – Supported, can physically perform any class requirements.
  3. **C Level**: Rider will ride at the walk only. CI – Independent. CS – Supported.
# Unit 6 – SOKY Equestrian Specifics

## Divisioning

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>English/Western</th>
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Special Olympics External Resources

This online coaching guide covers planning a season, teaching skills, teaching rules, and includes a quick start guide. It also includes virtual training/learning videos in which can offer you a more hands-on experience when learning about the sport of Equestrian.

Online Special Olympics Equestrian Coaching Guide
THANK YOU FOR FINISHING THE SOKY EQUESTRIAN SPORT CERTIFICATION TRAINING PRESENTATION! IN ORDER TO COMPLETE AND RECEIVE CREDIT FOR ENTIRE TRAINING, PLEASE TAKE THE FOLLOWING QUIZ:

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