Coach Education Program

Online Track & Field 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*
Track & Field Sport Certification

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

• The online Track & Field 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 Track & Field 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.
Coaching Special Olympics Athletes (Cont.)

The better the coach ... the better the experiences ... the better the athlete!
Please take a minute to watch this “I Coach Because Clip” created by Special Olympics New Jersey
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 Track and Field Specifics
Unit 1 – The Athlete Overview

- Psychological Issues or Learning Issues
- Medical Issues
- Social Issues
**Unit 1 – Psychological Issues & Considerations**

**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 atlanto-axial 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

- Incidence tends 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.
- 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 affects</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>Warm-up &amp; Stretching</td>
<td><strong>Specific to the sport, repetitive and involve athletes in leading activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Construction</td>
<td><strong>Break skills into smaller tasks, involve many athletes at a time and practice skills related to event situations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition Experience</td>
<td><strong>Simulate event situations and work towards what the competition will look like</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool-Down, Stretch, &amp; Reward</td>
<td><strong>Specific to the sport – play a game or end with a healthy post-training snack</strong></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)
Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session: Warm-Up (Cont.)

• 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:

- Light jog 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: Cool-Down

**Cool-Down**

- When your training, practice or sport session is complete you should always cool down. It 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.
- 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 meet 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 race 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>
Unit 2 – Managing Athlete Behavior

- 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.
## Unit 2 – Managing Athlete Behavior (Cont.)

<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 entry forms which include accurate qualifying times in which all are provided to SOKY State Office in a timely manner and by the requested due date.

- Help the specific Program Director 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.

*In Track & Field an athlete may enter up to two (2) events plus one relay in the same sport. Proper event selection is key for success with Track & Field athletes. Athletes entering running events should be able to finish the events as walking could result in disqualification.
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**

Coaches meetings (Who will supervise athletes during these?)
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.
Unit 3 – Competition-Day Coaching

**Guidelines for Success**

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

- **Arrive Early:** Allow time for putting on proper uniform, 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)

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
- 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!
Coaches Corner

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.

[SOKY COACHES CORNER]
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

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.”
Important General Information

- **Main Point of Contact:** Vice President of Field & Athlete Services
- **Spring Sport:** February-June
- **Season Timeline:**
  - **February – March:** Teams form and begin training for the season
  - **April – May:** Meets – Season consist of eight (8) meets
  - **June:** State Meet at Summer Games (Eastern Kentucky University)

**MEET DATES AND LOCATIONS VARY – PAST LOCATIONS INCLUDE:**

- University of Louisville, University of Kentucky, Frederick Douglass High School (Lexington), Bryan Station High School (Lexington), St. Xavier High School (Louisville), Meece Middle School (Somerset), Johnson Central High School (Paintsville), Bowling Green High School, Murray State University, Lloyd High School (Erlanger), Owensboro Middle School

**DURING THE SEASON, ATHLETES MUST ATTEND AND COMPETE IN AT LEAST ONE (1) MEET TO QUALIFY FOR THE STATE MEET. ATHLETES ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED TO COMPETE WITHIN THEIR AREA TOURNAMENT (PLEASE REFERENCE TO THE AREA MAP AHEAD).**

*SOKY Track & Field Sports Manual*
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

Individual Sports Area Map
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

National Governing Bodies

- The official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Athletics (Track & Field) Competitions.

- The National Governing Body Rules, United States Track & Field, shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the official Special Olympics Sport Rules. In such cases, the official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.

- Coaches should be familiar with all rules listed in each of the below resources.

  Special Olympics Athletics Rules
  United States Track & Field Rules
  SOKY Track & Field Sport Manual
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

Uniform Requirements

• During competition, athletes are not to have any medals or ribbons from previous awards ceremonies. Also, prior to entering any staging areas, athletes are to remove hats (unless made for track competition), fanny packs, etc. Athletes shall also adhere to the following uniform protocol:

• Acceptable Attire:
  ✓ Running shorts, basketball shorts or biker shorts
  ✓ Sweatpants or jogging pants
  ✓ T-shirts or tank tops (can NOT wear SOKY souvenir t-shirts)
  ✓ Sweatshirts

• Acceptable Footwear:
  ✓ Bare feet (not recommended)
  ✓ Athletic shoes, tennis shoes, basketball shoes, running shoes, cross-trainers or spiked-track shoes

*DENIM SHORTS OF ANY TYPE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE!
*WORK BOOTS AND HIKING BOOTS ARE UNACCEPTABLE FOOTWEAR!
*ARTIFICIAL HAIR COLORING AND ANY TYPE OF FACE PAINTING IS PROHIBITED DURING COMPETITION.
Tips on Proper Attire

- Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing and dressing appropriately for the weather with your athletes.
- Point out the advantages and disadvantages of various types of clothing.
- Show pictures of clothes that are appropriate for running and walking.
- Take your athletes to a local high school meet and point out clothes being worn.

A. **SHIRTS** - Shirts should provide comfort and a good appearance allowing freedom of movement in the shoulders and arms.

B. **SHORTS** - Gym shorts with waist bands that fit snugly around the waist are recommended. Loose shorts cause athletes discomfort and are a distraction from their sports activities.

C. **SOCKS** - Socks made of good material will add support, help prevent blisters, give good appearance and add length to the life of the shoes.

D. **SHOES** - A properly fitted running shoe is the most important article of clothing for a track & field athlete. A good running shoe should have:

  - a thick padded heel cushion which lowers incidence of calluses, bruises, spurs, shin splints, ankle sprains, etc.
  - a thick durable rubber sole
  - a firm heel counter which adds more stability and keeps the heel straight in the shoe
  - good flexibility
  - a good fit
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

Coaches “Survival” List

• Coaches please check out the Coaches “Survival” List prior to your first competition in which can be found on page 13 in the SOKY Track & Field Manual. [SOKY Track & Field Sport Manual]

• This list is broken down into the following sections to help prepare you the coach as much as possible prior to an event:
  - Administration, Uniforms, Medical, Equipment, Overnight Packing, Miscellaneous

![ARE YOU READY?](This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC)
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.
Track and Field Events Offered

**Track Events**

- 50 Meter Dash (minimum time of 7.99 seconds and a maximum time of 40.00 seconds)
- 100 Meter Dash (maximum time of 60.00 seconds or less)
- 200 Meter Dash
- 400 Meter Dash
- 800 Meter Dash
- 1500 Meter Run
- 5000 Meter Run
- 4 x 100 Meter Relay
- 4 x 100 Meter Unified Relay

*Proper event selection is key for success with Track & Field athletes. The 50 meter dash is a lead-up event to the 100 meter dash. If you register an athlete in the 100 meter dash, **DO NOT** register that same athlete in the 50 meter dash as well. Athletes entering running events should be able to finish the events as walking could result in disqualification.*
Track and Field Events Offered (Cont.)

- Pentathlon (100 meter run, running long jump, shot put, high jump, 400 meter run) An athlete with Down Syndrome that has been diagnosed with a positive Atlanto-Axial Instability may not participate in the pentathlon event due to the high jump.

- The 50 Meter Dash is intended for athletes of lower ability. Therefore, a minimum time has been set at 7.99 seconds or more (faster) and a maximum time of 40.00 seconds or less (slower) has been set. If your athlete does not run within these times, do NOT register them in this event. If they are entered in the 50 Meter Dash and at the games run beyond the set limits, he/she will be disqualified. Athletes not meeting these requirements may be entered in the 25 Meter Independent Walk, 50 Meter Walk or the 100 Meter Walk.

- The 100 Meter Dash is intended for athletes of higher ability. Therefore, a maximum running time of 60.00 seconds or less (slower) has been set. If your athlete does not run within this time, do NOT register them in this event. If they are entered in the 100 Meter Dash and at the games run beyond the set limits, he/she will be disqualified. Athletes not meeting these requirements may be entered in the 50 Meter Dash.

- Athletes that perform beyond these parameters at any event shall be disqualified and will receive a participation ribbon.
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

Track and Field Events Offered (Cont.)

Race Walking

- 50 Meter Walk
- 100 Meter Walk (*maximum time of 1 minute and 10 seconds or less*)
- 400 Meter Walk (*maximum time of 4 minutes or less*)
- 800 Meter Walk (*maximum time of 8 minutes or less*)

Wheelchair Events

- 100 Meter Wheelchair Race
- Wheelchair Shot Put (*4 lbs.*)

*Proper event selection is key for success with Track & Field athletes. The 50 meter walk is a lead-up event to the 100 meter walk. If you register an athlete in the 100 meter walk, **DO NOT** register that same athlete in the 50 meter walk as well.

*Additional wheelchair events can be found in the developmental events section in which be covered ahead.*
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

**Track and Field Events Offered (Cont.)**

- The 50 Meter Walk is intended for athletes of lower ability. This event is intended for athletes that can not perform the 100 Meter Walk or the 50 Meter Dash within the guidelines established.

- The 100 Meter Walk is intended for athletes of lower ability. Therefore, a maximum walking time of 1:10.00 (1 minute and 10 seconds) or less (slower) has been set. If your athlete does not walk within this time, do NOT register them in this event. If they are entered in the 100 Meter Walk and at the Games walk beyond the set limits, he/she will be disqualified. Athletes not meeting these requirements may be entered in the 50 Meter Walk.

- The 400 Meter Walk is intended for athletes of higher ability. Therefore, a maximum walking time of 4:00.00 (4 minutes) or less (slower) has been set. If your athlete does not walk within this time, do NOT register them in this event. If they are entered in the 400 Meter Walk and at the Games walk beyond the set limits, he/she will be disqualified.

- The 800 Meter Walk is intended for athletes of higher ability. Therefore, a maximum walking time of 8:00.00 (8 minutes) or less (slower) has been set. If your athlete does not walk within this time, do NOT register them in this event. If they are entered in the 800 Meter Walk and at the Games walk beyond the set limits, he/she will be disqualified.
Field Events

- High Jump (only in Pentathlon)
- Standing Long Jump (event for lower skilled athletes) *lead-up event for running long jump
- Running Long Jump (minimum distance of 1 meter)
- Softball Throw (event for lower skilled athletes) *lead-up event for shot-put
- Shot Put:
  - Men - 8 lbs.
  - Women - 6 lbs.
  - Men (8-11 years - 6 lbs.)
  - Women (8-11 years - 4 lbs.)
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

Track and Field Events Offered (Cont.)

Developmental Events

- 10 Meter Assisted Walk (walker, crutches, etc. – NO HUMAN ASSISTANCE)
- 25 Meter Independent Walk
- 25 Meter Assisted Walk (walker, crutches, etc. – NO HUMAN ASSISTANCE)
- 10 Meter Wheelchair Race (Lead-up to the 25 Meter Wheelchair Race)
- 25 Meter Wheelchair Race (Lead-up to the 100 Meter Race)
- 30 Meter Motorized Wheelchair Slalom
- 25 Meter Motorized Wheelchair Obstacle Course
- 2 x 25 Meter Wheelchair Shuttle Relay
- 2 x 25 Motorized Wheelchair Shuttle Relay
- Tennis Ball Throw
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

Rules of Competition

1. Starting Races:
   - According to USA Track and Field rules, all races shall be started with the firing of a pistol or another device which provides smoke or a flash visible to the timers. NO WHISTLE STARTS WILL BE ALLOWED!
   - In competition, the commands of the starter for races **400 meters and under**, shall be “on your marks”, “set”, and once competitors are set with no movement; the gun shall be fired.
   - In races **800 meters or longer**, the command shall be “on your marks” and when all competitors are steady, the gun shall be fired. A competitor shall not touch the ground with his/her hands.
   - **False starts**: If the starting motion is commenced prior to (or less than 0.10 second after) the sound of the gun. The runner is not allowed to commence starting until after receiving the starting signal (i.e., the runner must react to the gun, not anticipate it). If a false start is detected, the starter will fire the gun a second time and call the athletes back to the start line.

Race Specifics

1. **800 meter**: Depending on the track and at the starter’s discretion, runners will either
   - Use a waterfall start and break toward lane one immediately after the gun is fired or will run in the lanes through the first turn and break toward lane one at the breakline marked after the first turn.

2. **1500 meter and greater**: A waterfall start shall be used. Athletes entering these events should be able to finish these events as walking could result in disqualification.

3. **All races 100 meters or less**: shall be run on the straight-away.

   *In Track & Field an athlete may enter up to two (2) events plus one relay in the same sport.*
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

*Waterfall Start*

Generally used for 800m or longer
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

**Track Basics**
Standards set by the IAAF, track’s governing body.
2. **Race Walking:**

- Athlete must have one foot in touch with the ground at all times.
- In all race walking events, an athlete does not have to have a straight advancing leg while competing.
- In events up to and including the 400 meters, the competitor shall be disqualified with no prior warning when in the opinion of two or more officials, an advantage has been gained.
- All athletes shall use a standing start.
- Athletes competing in the 400m walk and the 800m walk may leave their lane after the start and break for the inside position. A curved waterfall starting line will be used.
- An athlete who is blatantly running will be disqualified from the race and will receive a participation ribbon only.
- A coach or volunteer is not allowed to walk the course with any athlete or otherwise aid the athlete during competition. This will result in disqualification.
3. All Track Events (including Race Walking):
- An athlete who comes out of his/her lane in an effort to gain an advantage by shortening the distance will be disqualified.
- An athlete who impedes the progress of another athlete by running in front of them will be disqualified. An athlete is not automatically disqualified for running out of his/her lane — only if they gain an advantage or impede the progress of another runner.

4. Running Long Jump:
- In the long jump, an athlete must be able to jump at least one (1) meter which is the minimum distance between the take-off board to the sand pit.
- Each competitor shall be allowed three (3) non-consecutive jumps. The athlete’s best jump will be used for scoring.
- All three (3) jumps shall be measured and recorded for the purpose of breaking ties. The best jump shall be used for scoring.
- Any jumper who lands his/her jumping foot past the toe board will be called for a foul and the jump will not count.
Rules of Competition (Cont.)

5. Standing Long Jump:

- Competitors shall start with both feet behind a designated take-off line and on the ground.
- When starting, competitors toes shall be behind the take-off line.
- A competitor shall use both feet on the take off. He/she may rock backward and forward lifting his/her heels and toes alternately, but he/she may not lift either foot clear off the ground.
- Each competitor shall be allowed three (3) non-consecutive jumps. The athlete’s best jump will be used for scoring.
- Distance will be measured from the closest impression on the landing area made by part of the body including arms or hands, to the take-off line.
- If possible, it is strongly suggested that the standing long jump event be conducted in sand filled jumping pits. If a mat is used, it should be long enough to include both take-off and landing areas, and the mat must be secured safely to the surface to prevent slipping.
**Rules of Competition (Cont.)**

6. **High Jump (Only in Pentathlon):**

- The competitor shall take off from one foot.

- The minimum opening height for all high jump competitions shall be one (1) meter. Competitors shall not dive forward over the bar or take off from a two-footed take off.

- If during warm-up, any competitor performs a deliberate forward dive or two-foot takeoff, that competitor shall be disqualified from the high jump and receive a participation ribbon.

- If during competition, any competitor performs a forward dive or two-foot takeoff, that competitor shall cease competition, and be given the proper place from the last legally declared height. If this occurs during the pentathlon, the competitor receives the points for the legally cleared height.
7. **Shot Put**

- The shot may be either steel, brass, or a synthetic-covered implement.
- **Size:**
  - Men: 4 kg/8.8 lbs.
  - Women: 3.0 kg/6.6 lbs.
  - Men (8-11 years): 3.0 kg/6.6 lbs.
  - Women (8-11 years): 1.81 kg/4 lbs.
- A legal put shall made from within the circle and the athlete, or his/her wheelchair in the course of the attempt, may not touch the top edge of the toe-board, the line of the circle, or any surface outside the circle. It is legal to touch the inside of the toe-board or iron band.
- Each competitor shall be allowed three non-consecutive throws. Measurement of each throw is required for the purpose of breaking ties.
- After each throw, the competitor must exit out of the back of circle (safety reason). If done incorrectly, this could lead to a scratched put.
Rules of Competition (Cont.)

7. Shot Put (Cont.)

- The use of any mechanical aid shall not be allowed. For protective purposes only, the wrist, the hand, or as many as two adjoining fingers may be taped. There shall be no connecting tape between fingers and the palm, fingers and the back of the hand, wrist and the palm, wrist and the back of the hand, fingers and the wrist and the front and the back of the hand between the fingers.

- The shot shall be put from the shoulder with one hand. The competitor takes a stance in the circle to commence a put, the shot shall touch or be in close proximity to the neck or the chin and the hand shall not be dropped below this position during the action of putting. The shot shall not be taken behind the line of the shoulders.

- The put shall be declared foul and shall not be measured if after entering the circle and starting the put, the competitor commits any of the following:
  
  ➢ Uses any method contrary to the definition of legal put
  ➢ Causes the shot to fall on or outside the lines marking the landing sector
  ➢ Puts a shot that does not conform to the legal requirements
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

Rules of Competition (Cont.)

8. Softball Throw

- This event is intended for athletes of lower ability and is a lead-up event to shot-put
- The following maximum throwing distances have been set:
  - Male Divisions: 35 meters
  - Female Divisions: 30 meters
- If an athlete can throw the softball beyond the set maximum distances, he/she should not be entered in this event. If an athlete throws beyond the maximum distance at an Area or State competition, he/she will be disqualified and receive a participation ribbon only.
- A thirty (30) centimeter (11 ¾”) in circumference softball shall be used.
- Competitors may use any type of throw.
- Each competitor shall be allowed three non-consecutive throws. The longest measurement of three throws will be used for scoring. Throws will be measured for the inner edge of the arced throwing restraining line.
8. **Softball Throw (Cont.)**

- The throwing areas should be set up as follows:

- Mark off two (2) parallel lines which are 2.85 meters in length, with each of the ends being two (2) meters apart.

- At the back end of the throwing area, place a mark 0.10 in length directly in the middle of the two end lines (this is your pull through point for measurement).

- From this mark, extend an imaginary parallel line out three (3) meters, mark this point, and draw an arc connecting both sidelines which intersect at this point.

- The ball must land within a sector determined by a forty (40) degree angle emanating from the center of the back line.

- Extend two lines out which intersect both points where the arc meets the sidelines.
Rules of Competition (Cont.)

Softball Throwing Station Diagram
9. **Pentathlon**

- The five events comprising the pentathlon shall be conducted in the following order: 100 meter dash, running long jump, shot put, high jump (only at the State Summer Games), and 400 meter dash.

- Pentathlon awards will be given after the completion of all events listed above.

- The Special Olympics Pentathlon scoring tables may be found in the index of the SOKY Track & Field Sports Manual. [SOKY Track & Field Sport Manual](#)
10. **Blind and Deaf Athletes**

- A rope or bell may be provided to assist athletes who are visually impaired. (Competitors must provide their own rope)

- A tap start may be used for an athlete who is deaf and blind.

- A sighted guide may not pull or prompt the athlete in any manner.
Rules of Competition (Cont.)

11. General Rules for Wheelchair Events

- Athletes entering wheelchair events may also enter other events in Track & Field competition.

- Athletes shall start with the first two wheels behind the start line. Athlete is timed from the starter’s whistle to when two wheels of the wheelchair reach the finish line.

- Motorized wheelchairs shall not be allowed in regular wheelchair races.

- Only athletes who ambulate by use of a wheelchair may participate in the events. Athletes shall not be pushed, pulled or otherwise assisted during these events.

- The lanes for the wheelchair events shall be made two track-lanes wide.
12. Relays

- The baton must change hands inside the changeover zone. If a baton exchange is made outside the 20m exchange zone, the team will be disqualified.

- A runner who has just handed over the baton to the next runner on his team must stay in his/her lane until all outgoing runners have cleared the area. A runner who steps outside his lane and impedes on an outgoing runner will have his/her team disqualified.

- Unified Relays: Each Unified Sports relay team shall consist of two athletes and two partners. Runners may be assigned to run in any order.

- KHSAA Unified Partner relay order rule does not apply to SOKY Track & Field relays

- SOKY relay teams must remain the same from Area games to State games

Proper Baton Exchange Tips
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

Relays
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Developmental Events

General Rules

• **There are certain events in SOKY Track & Field which have restrictions in regards to time or distance.** If an athlete fails to perform within these guidelines, that athlete will receive a Participation Ribbon only. (e.g. Tennis Ball Throw: the maximum distance allowed is 5 meters. If an athlete throws beyond this limit, he/she will be awarded a Participation Ribbon). There will be no exceptions to this rule.

• For Track & Field Events: In the event that an athlete is legally blind, a coach can provide verbal cues or a guide rope can be used. (Rope must be provided by competitor)

• In Track & Field an athlete may enter up to 2 events plus one relay in the same sport.

• All coaches should be familiar with rules/regulations regarding lead-up Events. In each sport lead-up Events have been designated. (e.g. An athlete **may not enter** both the Tennis Ball Throw and the Softball Throw. The Tennis Ball Throw is a Lead-up Event to the Softball Throw.)

• All equipment such as braces, walkers, crutches and wheelchairs must be in good working order. All wheelchair athletes must wear seat belts. Any athlete whose equipment does not meet these standards will not be allowed to participate.

• Athletes requiring auditory help may be assisted at the start by a coach.

• A tap start may be used for a deaf, blind or an autistic athlete.

• In most instances, Developmental Events will be run with co-ed divisions.

• **In the event that there are discrepancies in rules from this manual and the Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules Book, the Special Olympics Kentucky Developmental Manual will take precedence.**
TRACK & FIELD - RELATED EVENTS

The following events are designed for Severe and profoundly handicapped individuals:

1. Grasp and Lift
2. Object Transfer
3. Distance Ball Roll (Wheelchair)
4. Distance Ball Roll
5. Bean Bag Throw (Lead-up to the Tennis Ball Throw) **Maximum distance allowed for this event is 2 meters.**

*For the Grasp & Lift and Object Transfer events, coaches must provide all needed/used equipment.

**Concerning one-person heats:**

The athlete must post a time/score within 15% of his/her qualifying time, (higher or lower), in order to receive first place. (e.g. qualifying score turned in with registration is 10 seconds. The athlete must perform a better time or within 11.5 seconds.) Any performance above 15% will be awarded a silver medal. **HOWEVER, because there are so many variables which may affect the performance of the developmental athlete, (weather, new environment, crowd, etc.), the final decision on the place of finish will be left to the judges discretion.**
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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 Track and Field.

Online Special Olympics Track & Field Coaching Guide
Unit 6 – SOKY Track & Field Specifics

THANK YOU FOR FINISHING THE SOKY TRACK & FIELD SPORT CERTIFICATION TRAINING PRESENTATION! IN ORDER TO COMPLETE AND RECEIVE CREDIT FOR ENTIRE TRAINING, PLEASE TAKE THE FOLLOWING QUIZ:

CLICK HERE: SOKY TRACK & FIELD SPORT CERTIFICATION QUIZ