

***COACHES
HANDBOOK
FOR STATE-LEVEL
COMPETITIONS***



Special Olympics
Louisiana

Be a Fan.

Revised 7/11/08

SPECIAL OLYMPICS LOUISIANA
COACH/VOLUNTEER DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised: March 1999

Coach/volunteer delegate's responsibilities apply to training, competition, and any other Special Olympics activities at the local, parish, area, state, regional, national, and world levels. All of the following items apply to coaches. A volunteer delegate is any person who accompanies an athlete. The items numbered 9 through 22 apply to volunteer delegates. Area and local programs may have additional responsibilities which can be obtained from your Area or Parish Director.

Coach Knowledge/Training

1. Coaches should be thoroughly familiar with these coaches responsibilities and all information in your Coaches Information Guide and Coaches Handbook for each state event.
2. Coaches must be officially certified by SOLA to attend a State event in the capacity of coach. Coaches should refer to the certification guidelines and the coach to athlete ratio within these guidelines
3. Coaches shall be knowledgeable of all existing Special Olympics and International Governing Body competition rules and regulations and prepare their athletes prior to competition in accordance with those rules.

Athlete Eligibility

4. Coaches must bring a copy of each athlete's medical form to any training, local, parish, area, state event or other Special Olympics activities.
5. Coaches must verify athletes are 8 years of age or older.
6. Coaches/volunteer delegates must ensure that each athlete is pre-registered, and that athletes are not allowed to participate under another athlete's name.

Sportsmanship/Sports Rules

7. Coaches shall ensure that athletes compete in events within their sport which challenge their potential and are appropriate to their ability.
8. Coaches shall be honest and instruct athletes to compete with maximum effort in all preliminary trials and/or finals or he/she shall be prohibited from coaching by the sports specific rules committee at the competition.

9. Team Coaches shall ensure that athletes of all ability levels on a team participate in every game-
10. One coach per sport, school, group home, agency, etc., should attend all scheduled coaches meetings, while providing ample supervision of athletes

Safety/Supervision

11. Coaches/volunteer delegates should provide for the general welfare, safety, health, and well-being of each Special Olympics athlete in his/her charge, above all else.
12. Coaches/volunteer delegates are responsible for the conduct of their athletes.
13. SOLA does not permit any swimming activities on the local, parish, area or state level at local hotels or facilities, other than Aquatics competition and training organized under the SOI Aquatics safety guidelines. This means any Special Olympics athlete, Unified Partner, or coach/volunteer delegate attending an event, function, or training **should not be in a pool.**
14. When in a self-contained environment, such as a college campus, athletes/coaches/volunteer delegates should not leave the campus during the Games. When the Games are over you should check out with the Area Director or designee. When in a non-campus environment, travel to and from the event and hotels should be kept to a minimum.
15. Coaches/volunteer delegates cannot be under the influence or consume alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs during the time athletes are in their charge until the athlete is returned home. Coaches, Special Olympics athletes, and volunteer delegates supervising or staying with athletes during an activity or event must abide by this rule.
16. It is the policy of Special Olympics Louisiana, Inc. to comply with all applicable state and federal laws prohibiting harassment on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, handicap, citizenship, or veteran status. Special Olympics Louisiana, Inc. will not tolerate sexual harassment. Special Olympics Louisiana, Inc. will not tolerate any sexually related conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for the athletes, coaches, families, and/or volunteers

Responsibilities to Athletes

17. Coaches/volunteer delegates must provide the following specific services to each Special Olympics athlete in their charge:
 - A. Continuous supervision 24-hours a day, which must continue until athletes are placed in the charge of parents/guardians or appropriate persons.
 - B. Assist the athletes in accounting for luggage and personal items.
 - C. Assist in providing transportation of athletes when necessary.
 - D. Assure that badges are worn at all times, and conduct periodic checks to see that athletes are wearing the appropriate badge.

- E. Assist the athletes in taking full advantage of clinics and other events.
 - F. Assist the athlete in being assembled at the proper time and place for special events.
 - G. Assist the athlete in reporting to competition areas at proper times and at the site while athletes are participating.
 - H. Assist the athlete in moving to and from housing.
 - I. Assist the athlete in maximizing the benefits available through participation.
 - J. Review the athlete's medical form and ensure that prescribed medications are taken at proper times.
 - K. Assist the athlete in receiving and keeping track of souvenirs.
18. One coach per sport, school, group home, agency, etc., should attend all scheduled coaches meetings, while providing ample supervision of athletes. For the purpose of this sub-part, ample supervision shall be a minimum of one (1) coach or other responsible adult for each five (5) athletes. Other coaches are welcome to attend the meeting, but the supervision ratio must be maintained. If supervision cannot be maintained, the coach/coaches should inform the Area Director so arrangements can be made with a coach who is attending to share the information upon his/her return from the meeting.
19. Coaches/volunteer delegates should not allow athletes to return to dormitories/hotels or attend activities without proper supervision.

Coach Behavior Conduct

20. Coaches/volunteer delegates should dress and act at all times in a manner which will be a credit to Special Olympics and its delegation.
21. Coaches/volunteer delegates should report all emergencies to appropriate authorities after taking immediate action to ensure the health and safety of participants. Be sure you have read the Procedures for Reporting Incidents and the Universal Precaution guidelines and that any incidents or potential incidents and emergencies are reported to the Special Olympics senior staff immediately.
Coaches/volunteer delegates must not spend Special Olympics money on themselves or athletes or solicit money without prior consent of the Parish or Area program.
22. Coaches/volunteer delegates shall abide by the letter and spirit of the rules and be responsible for conducting his or herself in a sportsman-like and courteous manner at all times. Coaches/volunteer delegates who do not conduct themselves in this manner,

- or who are offensive by action or language toward athletes, other coaches, volunteers, opponents, officials, and/or spectators, may be prohibited from coaching.
23. Failure to uphold these responsibilities, or violation of a rule, may result in immediate expulsion from the event, activity, or Special Olympics participation. Refer to the conduct review policy.
24. While these enumerated responsibilities must be met, coaches/volunteer delegates must take any other steps necessary to assure the athlete safe and rewarding participation in the Special Olympics program.

NOTE: These responsibilities may be updated periodically as needed. Please check with your Area Director or the state office to see if you have the most current revision and for other information mentioned which may not appear in your Coaches Information Guide.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS LOUISIANA CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct is designed to assure that each participant abides by the philosophy of the mission of Special Olympics. Participant includes any athlete, coach, volunteer, staff or any other person involved in SOLA. In return for appropriate conduct, individuals will be treated with respect and openness. Athletes will also have access to self-improvement training opportunities and be placed in an environment appropriate to their level of competence. All participants of Special Olympics Louisiana are expected to conduct themselves according to the following Code of Conduct:

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- < Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all individuals involved in Special Olympics.
- < Treat everyone equally regardless of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- < Exhibit good sportsmanship at all times.
- < Serve as a positive role model for others.

ALL PARTICIPANTS SHALL ACT WITH DIGNITY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS/HER ACTIONS

- < The participant's language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate the highest standards.
- < The participant shall display control, respect and dignity to all involved in Special Olympics.
- < The participant shall set a positive example through his/her actions and encourage others to exhibit the same qualities.
- < The participant shall not consume alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs while participating in Special Olympics Louisiana events.
- < The participant will not engage in any disruptive behavior that interferes with the rights of others or impedes the training or competition of athletes.
- < The participant not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual

advances on others.

- < All participants are expected to follow the guidelines and rules as established by Special Olympics Louisiana and Special Olympics, Inc.

AGREEMENT

- < All participants are expected to obey this Code of Conduct.
- < This Code of Conduct is a general guide for the conduct of a participant and does not describe all types of good and bad behavior.
- < If a participant does not obey this Code of Conduct, the participant will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Special Olympics Louisiana Participation Policy.
- < This Code of Conduct shall be applicable during any Special Olympics Louisiana event or training session.

Revised and Approved: December 1, 2001

CONDUCT REVIEW POLICY **Revised September 16, 1995**

The intent of this policy is not to exclude, but to include all individuals who are eligible for participation. Special Olympics does not exclude athletes, coaches, or volunteers solely due to inappropriate behavior. However, a person in higher authority (i.e. school agency, SOLA staff, coach, Area Director, Parish Director) can exclude an athlete, coach, or volunteer from training and/or competition, or participation because of inappropriate behavior.

Prior to exclusion, if a person in higher authority feels they cannot provide adequate leadership and/or supervision of an athlete, coach, or volunteer due to the inappropriate behavior of same athlete, coach, or volunteer:

Step 1: The person in higher authority shall discuss the behavior with the athlete, coach, or volunteer, and a plan shall be designed to improve the behavior. Person in higher authority shall begin written documentation of the inappropriate behavior and the action to be taken.

Step 2: The person in higher authority shall seek the assistance of other school personnel, parent, or guardian, or other parties involved. The documentation of the person in higher authority is shared with this group, and alternatives discussed (i.e. family might assume training and attend competitions to control athlete's behavior). This plan is outlined.

Step 3: Review by a Sportsmanship Committee.* This committee shall be made up of individuals from the Board of Directors, program volunteers, and SOLA staff. This committee reviews the documentation, hears comments as requested, and rules on the exclusion. Discipline of an athlete, coach, or volunteer shall be determined by the severity of the inappropriate behavior. Recommendation of the Sportsmanship Committee shall be presented to the Executive Director for his action.

- * The Sportsmanship Committee varies from area to area, event to event, and is appointed by SOLA staff. The scope extends from local programs to World Games.

The above steps shall not be necessary if the situation warrants immediate disciplinary action. Individuals have a right to an appeal. This appeal should be made in writing, within two weeks, to the Executive Director, who will then appoint an appeal committee. This committee shall consist of the Board Chair or Vice Chair, the Executive Director and one other member.

ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES

Revised: June 1998

1. The athlete must be at least 8 years of age on the first day of the competition.
2. The athlete must bring an adequate supply of prescribed medication labeled properly, if applicable.
3. The athlete should be able to perform the skills required to compete in their events without human assistance and must have been in an eight-week training program prior to competition.
4. The athlete should bring to the games any equipment and personal items necessary for competition.
5. Athletes shall abide by the letter and spirit of the rules and be responsible for conducting his or herself in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Athletes who do not conduct themselves in this manner, or who are offensive by action or language toward other athletes, coaches, volunteers, opponents, officials, and/or spectators, may be disqualified from further participation.
6. Athletes who do not participate honestly and with maximum effort in all preliminary trials and/or finals shall be disqualified from all remaining events by the sports specific rules committee at the competition.

SAFETY AND OTHER REGULATIONS

The following activities will be strictly prohibited during the Special Olympics Louisiana events:

- Possession or use without a doctor's prescription of any narcotic, stimulant, depressant, or hallucinogenic drug.
- Possession or use of candles, lanterns, firearms, gasoline, or other dangerous materials.
- Possession or use of any electrical, cooking, or food or beverage preparation appliances.
- Gambling
- Possession or housing of any pets or animals.
- Swimming in the hotel pools.

GAMES RULES COMMITTEE

The Sports Rules Committee for each event or sport is responsible for making all decisions at that site. Their decision is final.

If you wish to appeal a decision, you must complete the PROTEST FORM (located in this Coaches Handbook) and present it to the Competition Director who will present it to the Games Rules Committee no later than 30 minutes after the decision is made. If this procedure is not followed, the Rules Committee will not accept the Protest Form. The Rules Committee can be contacted by asking the Competition Director (or other person with radio communications) to contact the Games Rules Committee.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF COMPETITION

The rules and regulations established by Special Olympics International and the NGB sport will be followed. Officials will be observing the athlete's performance levels. If athletes are not competing according to the rules and regulations, the athlete will be disqualified. Those athletes who are disqualified will receive a green participation ribbon.

ATHLETES MAY COMPETE IN ONLY ONE SPORT. COACHES MAY COACH ONLY ONE SPORT PER STATE EVENT. COACHES MAY COACH ONLY ONE TEAM PER EVENT.

AGE GROUPS

The following age groups shall be used for all Special Olympics Team Competitions:

Junior Level: 15 and under
Senior Level: 16 and over
Open Ages

RAIN PLAN

In case of rain, please check with your venue director at the competition site or with your Area Director before assuming competition will be canceled. Competition will be completed if at all possible, and is the coach's responsibility to check with the Games Director regarding rescheduling of games.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Dealing with the Crisis:

The key to dealing with a crisis and minimizing the effects are:

- o Prepare for the unexpected.
- o Take immediate action when the crisis occurs.
- o Communicate well with all identified individuals.
- o Deal with the situation in a calm and factual manner.

In Case of an Emergency:

In case of an emergency, determine whether proper authorities have been notified (police, fire department, rescue squad). The first priority is to prevent further injury and give necessary treatment to individuals who are injured. Request first aid assistance. Ask someone to maintain crowd control. As soon as possible, report the emergency to Special Olympics officials at the Operations Center. (See attached "Procedures for Reporting Incidents".)

The following are recommended procedures in the event of an emergency:

I. Accident or Serious Injury:

- A. Report incident to the nearest medical personnel or call the Operations Center.
- B. If you are unable to locate medical personnel at the scene contact the Operations Center, via the nearest communications facility (phone or hand-held radio).
- C. Operations Center, when contacted, should:
 - 1. Dispatch appropriate necessary medical and security advising them of a **specific incident**.
 - 2. Notify the Crisis Communication Team Leader of the incident.
- D. The Crisis Communication Team would then meet and decide on appropriate response and release of any information.

II. Evacuation For Any Catastrophic Emergency

- A. Notify the Crisis Communication Team through the Operation Center phone number.
- B. The Crisis Team will then be advised to the extent of and time of any evacuation and will notify all those impacted using any or all of the following means:
 - 1. The radio communication networks by notifying all networks of the need to evacuate and advising them of the seriousness of the situation.
 - 2. Announcements made via the public address systems at all event venues.
 - 3. Using beepers to notify all Area Directors and others equipped with beepers.
 - 4. Notify and advise all coaches and their directors at their respective scheduled meetings.
- C. Operation Center will notify all appropriate Transportation Services required to effect the evacuation.
- D. Operation Center will notify Security and all other law enforcement agencies necessary to assist in the evacuation.
- E. If so advised, all evacuees will report to the evacuation site, which for this event, will be designated at that time. All participants will remain at the evacuation site until notified otherwise.

- F. The Operations Center will notify and the Security Committee will participate with other local law enforcement agencies, as needed, to canvas all event sites and venues

to insure that the evacuation has been completed.

III. Fire

- A. Contact local Fire Department and commence any necessary evacuation. The Fire Department contact phone number for this event shall be the Operations Center.
- B. Contact Security at the Operations Center number .
- C. Contact the Operations Center at phone number listed in the front of the Handbook.
- D. Activate all necessary fire alarms.
- E. Follow the following fire safety tips:
 - 1. Evacuate everyone in an orderly fashion.
 - 2. Escape away from the direction of fire and smoke.
 - 3. Assist non-ambulatory persons.
 - 4. Once at safety location, account for all persons in your responsibility.
- F. The Operations Center will notify the Communication Crisis Team.
- G. The Crisis Team will meet and decide on an appropriate response to third parties and to the media.

IV. Serious Misbehavior or Criminal Activity on Behalf of an Athlete, i.e., Assault, Rape, Theft, Serious Vandalism, Etc.

- A. Control the situation to the extent possible, and call security at the Operations Center phone number .
- B. The Operations Center shall:
 - 1. Contact the Medical Committee and other medical resources, if necessary.
 - 2. Alert Security, if they have not already been notified.
 - 3. Alert the Crisis Team.
 - 4. Notify the coach and Area Director of the athlete involved.
- D. The Crisis Team will coordinate with Security and local law enforcement concerning any investigations, and will make the appropriate response and release of information to the media and third parties.

V. Missing Athlete

- A. Notify the Operations Center, giving them the name and/or description of the athlete, at phone number indicated in this handbook.
- B. Event Security shall:
 - 1. Organize the search for the missing athlete.
 - 2. Coordinate with outside law enforcement agencies, if necessary, to expand the search.
- C. The Operations Center will notify the Crisis Team if athlete is not found within 30 minutes.
- D. The Operations Center will also notify all event communication networks and then, if necessary, make the appropriate announcements through the public address systems at all local event venues.
- E. The Crisis Team will meet and decide on an appropriate release of any information to the news media.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS LOUISIANA
Procedures for Reporting Incidents
at State, Area, or Local Events

If a situation arises that may be of a delicate nature, the volunteer should report the incident immediately to his/her supervisor, and that individual should report to his/her supervisor until the chain of command reaches the State Staff Liaison or President/CEO. (Local programs should report all incidents to Parish Directors; Parish Directors should report all incidents to Area Directors; and Area programs should report all Local and Area incidents to the State Staff. Games volunteers report to chairpersons, who report to Directors, who report to State Staff. Coaches report to Area Directors, who report to State Staff.)

A written report, based on an interview with the athlete or volunteer involved, should be completed immediately by the volunteer reporting the incident. The volunteer should also be available for discussion regarding the incident, if necessary.

Any incident should be reported and documented, even if the interview results in negative findings.

If the incident is of a medical nature, the medical team should be contacted immediately. The medical team will complete the appropriate accident or incident forms and return these forms to the State Staff for future reference. The medical team will make the State, Area, or Local Staff aware of any incident that may result in complications during the event, or at a later date (ie., contagious diseases, insurance claims on broken bone, etc.).

The Special Olympics Louisiana Staff will notify SOLA legal counsel and/or university and law enforcement authorities, if and when it becomes apparent that a criminal activity may have occurred.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS LOUISIANA Participation Policy

Special Olympics Louisiana (SOLA) has adopted the following policy regarding its ability to screen, limit, deny or otherwise control the persons that it allows to participate in SOLA activities. Participation in SOLA is a privilege and not a right. The participants must obey the rules and Codes of Conduct established by SOLA or may be denied the opportunity to participate in the SOLA program.

PURPOSE: The purpose of enacting this Participation Policy is to ensure the safety and welfare of SOLA athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff and all others involved with SOLA. This purpose will be achieved by limiting, restricting, and/or banning participation in SOLA by those who fall within the terms of this policy.

PARTICIPANT: Participant includes any athlete, coach, volunteer, staff or any other person involved with SOLA.

POLICY: SOLA has determined that if the following actions have occurred, the Participant may be limited or banned from SOLA activities:

- Any criminal conviction
- Any pending criminal charge until such charge has been favorably resolved.
- Use or sale of illegal drugs and/or firearms.
- Any violation of the SOLA Code of Conduct.
- Any other actions which may harm other participants or reflect negatively on SOLA.
- Any known aggressive behavior towards others.
- Any Participant who has been permanently banned from participation by another U.S. Special Olympics Program may not participate in any SOLA Activity.

All determinations regarding possible limitation, expulsion, restrictions, and/or banning from SOLA activities will be determined on a case by case basis by the President/CEO of SOLA. Once SOLA is made aware of a possible violation of the policy, SOLA may take any of the following actions:

- Verify the violation or charges with the proper state and/or local authorities;
- SOLA may conduct a background check of a Participant, including criminal, employment, credit or social/rehabilitation services; and
- Notify the Participant, parent(s) or guardian(s) and the Local Program Coordinator, as required of such action(s) being taken.

A Participant who has been notified of any restriction or ban may appeal to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of SOLA. The appealing party may provide additional reasons or justifications to relieve the restriction or ban. The appeal may be made in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Directors within **30 days** after receiving notice of the restriction or ban. If an appeal is made, the Executive Committee shall convene within a reasonable time to further review the matter and recommend the following:

- Further investigation;
- Support the restriction or ban;
- Relief from the restriction or ban; or
- Any other relief that the Executive Committee deems appropriate.

The determination of the Executive Committee shall be final.

At all times, this policy will be applied to protect the health and safety, and rights of the participants in Special Olympics Louisiana. This policy shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

COACHES' CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

DEFINITION

Coach Any individual who works with an athlete on a regular basis in a structured sports training program or any individual who is called upon to "coach" athletes during a competition (i.e., assist in spotting athletes in gymnastics, powerlifting, warmup exercises, and other coaching duties).

Volunteer Any individual whose sole purpose is to sit with athletes
Delegate during an event, drive the bus, take athletes to Olympic Town, get cokes, etc.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

High-Risk 100% certification of coaches who attend state events in
Events high-risk sports on a 1:4 ratio. Wheelchair events would have a 1:1 ratio double certification. Currently effective. Delegation volunteers can be allotted upon request within reason. High-risk sports include:

Aquatics	Gymnastics
Canoeing	Ice Skating
Cycling	Powerlifting
Equestrian	Sailing
Golf	Skiing (Nordic & Alpine)
	Wheelchair

Low-Risk Events 100% certification of coaches who attend state events in low-risk sports on a 1:5 ratio effective 1988. Volunteer Delegates will be allotted upon request within reason up to 7% of the total athlete allotment. Low-risk sports include:

Athletics	Croquet
Badminton	Horseshoes
Bocce	Roller Skating
Bowling	Table Tennis
	Tennis

Team Sports 100% certification for all team sports where both coaches must be certified.

Basketball	Softball
Football (Soccer)	Team Handball
	Volleyball

INTENT OF CERTIFICATION

The intent of this certification statement is to ensure that all coaches who work with Special Olympics are certified but does not require sports certification of individuals who are not in a coaching capacity but whose presence is necessary for the ease of managing the delegation.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Bowen presented the revised transportation policy to be aligned with SOI policy. Revisions (to the third paragraph) suggested by the board are to read as follows:

SOLA Transportation Policy:

SOLA employees and volunteers are encouraged to practice safe driving at all times while traveling on SOLA business. Seatbelts should be worn at all times and all applicable laws must be followed. Employees and volunteers should also refrain from talking on cellular phones while operating motor vehicles, unless a hands-free device is used.

Employees and volunteers are encouraged to read the Louisiana Worker's Compensation Corp.'s "Tips for Preventing Vehicle Accidents" and practice these guidelines. A copy of these guidelines can be obtained from LWCC's website at www.lwcc.com or from SOLA headquarters.

No SOLA funds shall be used to rent or procure 15 passenger single rear axle vans to transport SOLA employees, volunteers or athletes due to the questionable safety history of such vehicles.

SOLA also recommends that volunteers not utilize 15 passenger single rear axle vans to transport volunteers or athletes to SOLA events for this same reason.

A motion was made by Dr. Diodene, seconded by John Paul and passed unanimously to accept the policy changes with the above revisions as presented by Bowen.

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS LOUISIANA
INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Please remember that there is one official spokesperson for Special Olympics Louisiana.

Person completing form:

Date and time filed:

What happened?

When did the incident occur? (Date and Time)

Where did the incident happen?

How and why did it happen? (Facts Only - Use additional paper if necessary)

Who was involved?

Extent of injuries and/or damages (Do not give out estimates, if there is property damage):

Who did you notify?

PROTEST FORM

For Use At All Special Olympics Games and Competitions

This form must be submitted to the Protest Table no later than 30 minutes after the conclusion of the event being protested.

DATE: _____ TIME SUBMITTED:

SPORT: _____ EVENT:

AGE GROUP: _____ DIVISION (HEAT):

ATHLETE'S NAME OR TEAM'S NAME:

REASON FOR PROTEST:

STATE PAGE, NUMBER, AND SECTION OF VIOLATION FROM THE APPROPRIATE RULE BOOK (i.e., TAC and Official Olympics Rule Books)

Signature of Sport Head Coach:

DECISION BY JURY/REFEREE

Protest Approved: _____ Protest Denied:

Signed: _____ Time:

SUGGESTION FORM

EVENT:

LOCATION:

DATE:

I would like to offer the following suggestion(s) in order to enhance future Special Olympics competitions:

Suggestion(s):

Taking Athletes to a Competition

It is the coach's responsibility to have the athletes prepared physically and mentally for the competition. This involves ensuring that all uniforms are ready, all athletes have proper footwear, all equipment is present, meals and transportation are available and all entries are correct. Below are a few tips for coaches to follow before, during and after the game/meet/match.

Athlete Flow at Competitions

Coaches do not determine flow of athletes. Coaches have to know the athlete flow of a specific competition to ensure that athletes are where they need to be at the time that they need to be there.

Coaching Tip

Athlete flow process is designed to make the athlete experience as smooth as possible from arriving at the competition to receiving awards to leaving the competition.

Before the Game/Meet/Match

Make final check of all equipment and athlete needs.

Be confident and relaxed.

Be sure your athletes are warmed up, stretched and ready to compete.

Be sure to have the proper shoes for each event.

Be positive and upbeat but do not over excite.

At the Game/Meet/Match

Encourage and support your athletes, but do not yell and scream. Keep calm and offer positive reinforcement at the competition.

Restrict coaching from the bleachers to positive comments that athletes can use at the time of competition.

Tell parents to be supportive but not to coach athletes.

Keep substitutions simple. Have substitutes ready for relays in case of injuries or no-shows.

Commit yourself to equal participation throughout the season.

Give different athletes the chance to compete in new events for which they have trained. Be a coach who allows the athlete to progress to new levels.

Make sure that the athletes have plenty of fluids.

After the Game/Meet/Match

Say "well done" or "good effort" to all your athletes when appropriate.

Be sure to collect all the equipment from each athlete.

Cool down after competition to prevent soreness.

Spend time reviewing the athletes' performances and prepare some useful comments for the beginning of the next practice

Winning and Losing

Coaches and athletes must remind themselves that winning is measured by how well they apply all their effort and maintain self-control in pressure situations. Winning means more than where you place at the finish line. An athlete is never a loser if he/she gives maximum effort.

To that end, the first question a coach needs to ask before a competition is

"Are you ready to give it everything you've got?"

The first questions after a competition need to be

"How did that feel?"

"Do you feel like you did your best?"

Coaching Tip

Remember, positive thoughts yield positive results.

Well-prepared athletes will handle their performance and the performance of their competitors in a positive and sportsmanlike manner in accordance to the Athlete's Code of Conduct and the Official Sports Rules for your sport. A losing outcome does not negatively impact the athletes' confidence if the coach and athletes have been successful in developing a winning attitude.

The athlete's effort, attitude and personal skills attainment must be rewarded and positively reinforced.

It is also important to remind athletes that the point of competing in Special Olympics is to prove to themselves and the rest of the world what they can do. The award ceremony is a chance for the world to see a group of skilled athletes celebrating their sport skills and

enjoyment of competition.

Athletes of all ages, regardless of intellectual ability, enter competitions to do their best and hopefully to win. Is it all right to be disappointed when you do not win? Of course it is. But also, it is a chance to evaluate your performance and make a training commitment that will help you perform better next time.