



Special Olympics

Oklahoma

Be a fan.

WELCOME to Special Olympics! Special Olympics is a sports training and competition program for persons with intellectual disabilities [mental retardation]. Approximately 9,500 children and adults participate in Special Olympics Oklahoma, but that number is only a small percentage of those eligible. We hope the information provided will be helpful in getting your friend or family member involved. **Special Olympics provides something for everyone, from fitness & fun to family support and friendships!**

Participation in Special Olympics occurs in many ways. While in school students generally compete with a school team; with their Special Education or P.E. teacher being their coach. If a school does not have a team, athletes can participate as independents or with a community-based team (often begun and lead by parents). Many people believe that once out of school competition in Special Olympics ends. This is definitely *not* the case! Once out of school an athlete can participate with community-based teams, teams formed by provider agencies, or as an independent.

Official competition is for those 8 years old and above. However, Special Olympics Oklahoma offers "Under-8, Stars of the Future". This is a training event for youngsters 4-7 years old and takes place during Summer State Games and Winter State Games. Several areas now offer this event during the spring.

No matter how the competition occurs the one constant in all of this is the **COACH!** Because Special Olympics is a *sports training* and *competition* program all athletes need a coach to assist in their training. A coach may be a parent or other relative, a close friend, or anyone willing to get some training, provide practice opportunities for their athlete(s), and do a little paperwork. Coaches' training clinics are offered during the year and are free of charge. (see *next page for more information*)

Approximately 120 competitions are offered throughout the state each year. Area/local fall and spring competitions occur between September and April (see "A Year in Review"). Two state competitions are held as well; Winter Games in Norman in January and Summer Games in Stillwater in May.

This is just a brief introduction to Special Olympics Oklahoma. Please examine the information provided. If you have questions or need more information please contact Cathi Morris, Program Services Manager at 800/722-9004 or 918/481-1234 or cathi@sook.org

BE A FAN OF EMPOWERMENT!

What happens next?

- Find a team: check with your child's school/workshop/group home/or other service provider to see if they already participate. If so, be sure to let the coach know your son/daughter is interested. The coach should provide you with needed forms and information. A list of community teams is included in this packet. Community teams are generally lead by parents & other community volunteers. And more are needed!
- If there is not an established team your son/daughter can join, **you** (or the designated coach) will need to know the **competition dates & locations**, as well as entry deadlines. **Competition Schedules are now available on our website: www.sook.org . They are posted at the following times: fall (Aug), Winter State Games (Nov), spring (Dec), Summer State Games (Feb)**. If you are unable to download the packet call the state office in Tulsa and ask to be mailed one, 800/722-9004 or 918/481-1234.
- Athlete Application for Participation/Medical Release Form: **This is required of all Special Olympics athletes**. The current form is good through August 2010. These are always included in the competition schedule and can be found on the website under "forms". The coach is to include a **copy** of the completed form with each sport entry. A one time Down Syndrome Addendum is required for those athletes with Down's Syndrome.
- Train and practice! Whether your Special Olympics athlete is part of a team or participating as an independent, training and practice is essential! All sports require entry scores in order for the athletes to be placed in correct/fair competition groups. Accurate entry scores can only come from training and practice!
- Coaches' Training: Teams are required to have at least one person (coach/assistant coach) certified in each sport their athletes enter. Coaches' Certification Courses are offered several times each year in different sports and are free to attend. Training opportunities are included in the Spring and Fall Competition Schedules (see website).
- Volunteer Applications and Background Screenings: All coaches & other Class A volunteers are required to have a current volunteer application on file with Special Olympics Oklahoma. Background screenings through a national vendor are conducted on all Class A volunteers. In addition all Class A volunteers are required to complete the online Protective Behaviors Training (see link on our website). This process should be completed prior to working with Special Olympics athletes. The complete Volunteer Registration & Screening Policy can be found on the SOOK website under Volunteers. *Class A volunteers are defined as those persons who have regular, close contact with Special Olympics athletes, persons in a position of authority or supervision, & persons with administrative responsibility. This includes coaches, assistant coaches, chaperones, Unified Sports Partners, organizational committee members. Parents & Family members fitting the description are also considered Class A volunteers – even if they are responsible for their child only.*
- Form a team: Training and practice is much more fun (and beneficial) when done in groups! If you want to form a community team (lead by parents, volunteer coaches, and others from your community) contact the state office. We will contact other independents in your area, as well as volunteers interested in coaching, set-up and facilitate an organizational meeting. Community teams are not just for adults, many school age athletes compete individually, too, but could benefit from the team atmosphere.

WHO IS THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE?

Is the person eight (8) years of age or older?

YES

NO

Is the person identified by the schools or other human services agency as having **mental retardation**?

The person is not eligible for Special Olympics.

YES

NO

This person is eligible for Special Olympics.

Is the person identified by the schools or other human services agency as having a developmental disability with functional limitations in both general learning and adaptive skills?

YES

Are the functional limitations solely due to: physical disabilities, emotional disturbance, behavior disorders, specific learning disabilities, visual impairments, or sensory disabilities?

NO

YES

This person is eligible for Special Olympics.

This person is not eligible for Special Olympics.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY

IV. A.3. Persons are eligible for Special Olympics provided they are:

PERSONS AGE EIGHT AND ABOVE WHO ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE MENTAL RETARDATION*AS DETERMINED BY THEIR LOCALITIES.

PERSONS WHO HAVE CLOSELY RELATED DEVELOPMENT DISABILITIES SUCH AS THOSE WHO HAVE FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS, BOTH IN GENERAL LEARNING AND IN ADAPTIVE SKILLS SUCH AS RECREATION, WORK, INDEPENDENT LIVING, SELF-DIRECTION, OR SELF-CARE.**

NOTE: PEOPLE WITH FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS BASED SOLELY ON A PHYSICAL, BEHAVIORAL, EMOTIONAL, SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY, OR SENSORY DISABILITY ARE NOT ELIGIBLE.

- Any person eight (8) years of age or older who is identified as having mental retardation by an agency or a professional in any given local area is considered eligible for Special Olympics. Other terms that may be used synonymously with mental retardation include: cognitive disabilities, mental handicaps, or intellectual disabilities.
- When the term “mental retardation” or other similar descriptor is not used to identify the person in a local area, eligibility should be determined by whether or not the person has functional limitations in **both general learning and adaptive skills**. “**Developmental disability**” is the term most often used to describe persons with both limitations. Other terms that may be used synonymously with developmental disability are developmental handicap, developmentally delayed or severe disabilities.

General Learning Limitations refers to substantial deficits in conceptual, practical, and social intelligence that will result in performance problems in academic learning and/or general life functioning. Learning limitations may be assessed by standardized tests (e.g., intelligence or achievement tests) or through criterion-referenced measures (e.g., teacher/parent observations or actual performance samples).

Adaptive Skill Limitations refers to on-going performance deficits in skill areas considered essential to successful life functioning. These adaptive skill areas include: *communication, self-care, home-living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, Recreation/leisure and work.*¹ Adaptive skills limitations may be measured by standardized tests (e.g., adaptive behavior scales or checklists) or through criterion-referenced measures (e.g., teacher/parent observations or actual performance samples).

If the person is identified as having a development disability with functional limitations in both general learning and adaptive skills, it must still be determined by an agency or a professional whether or not the functional limitations are solely due to mental retardation or a closely related developmental disability. If the functional limitations are solely due to: physical disabilities, emotional disturbance, behavior disorders, specific learning disabilities, visual impairments, or sensory disabilities, this person is not eligible for Special Olympics.

¹ Source: American Association on Mental Retardation: Definition, classification, and systems of supports. Washington, D.C: Author.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

This represents a typical year of
Special Olympics Oklahoma programming.

JUNE - AUGUST

Areas work on scheduling competitions, trainings, & fundraisers
for the next year

AUGUST

Fall competition schedules available online: www.sook.org

SEPTEMBER - FEBRUARY

Fall competitions - art & music, basketball (& skills),
bowling (& unified), equestrian, golf, soccer (& skills), unified® volleyball

NOVEMBER

Winter State Games registration packets available online

JANUARY

Winter Games (Mid-January)

Spring competition schedules available online

FEBRUARY - APRIL

Spring competitions - aquatics, athletics, bocce (& unified®), golf, horseshoes (& unified®),
MATP, powerlifting, unified® softball,
unified® 3 on 3 basketball

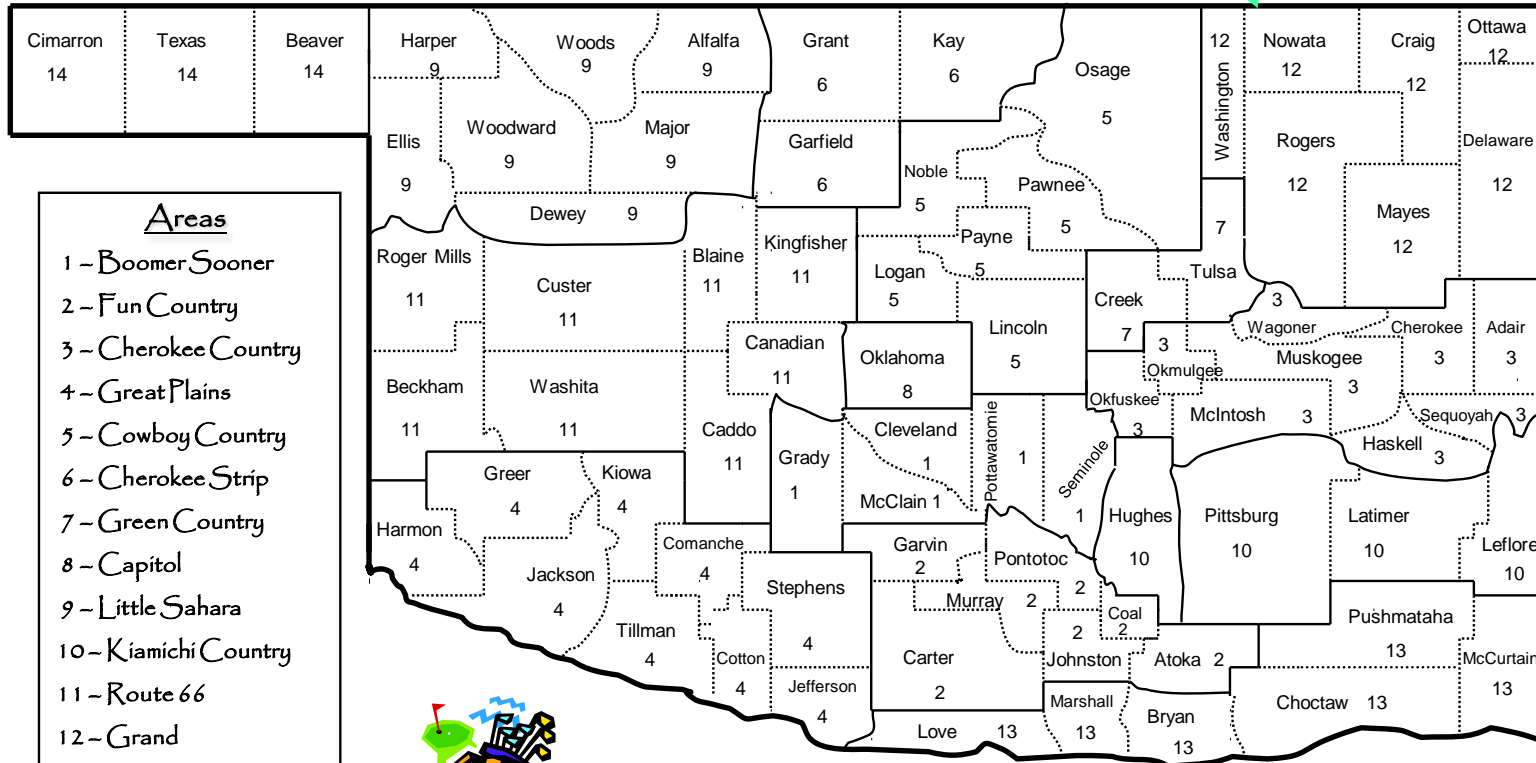
February

Summer State Games registration packets available online

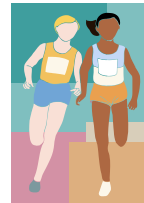
MAY

Summer Games (the week following OSU graduation)

SOOK Area Map



- Areas**
- 1 - Boomer Sooner
 - 2 - Fun Country
 - 3 - Cherokee Country
 - 4 - Great Plains
 - 5 - Cowboy Country
 - 6 - Cherokee Strip
 - 7 - Green Country
 - 8 - Capitol
 - 9 - Little Sahara
 - 10 - Kiamichi Country
 - 11 - Route 66
 - 12 - Grand
 - 13 - Red River
 - 14 - Panhandle



**Special Olympics
Oklahoma**





Special Olympics
Oklahoma

Fact Sheet

Unified Sports®

Background

Unified Sports® is a pioneering program that combines athletes with and without mental retardation, of similar age and ability, on teams that compete against other Unified Sports® teams. The Unified Sports® program was launched throughout the United States in 1989, after two years of field testing. Unified Sports® expands sports opportunities for athletes seeking new challenges and dramatically increases integration in the community.

Special Olympics Oklahoma current includes Unified Sports® competition in the following sports: 3on3 Basketball, Bocce, Bowling, Horseshoes, Soccer, Softball, and Volleyball.

Benefits of Unified Sports®

- Integrates athletes with and without mental retardation in a setting where all athletes are challenged to improve their skills:
- Provides a valuable sports opportunity to individuals with mental retardation who are not presently involved with Special Olympics: especially those with mild retardation, and those in communities where there are not enough Special Olympics athletes to conduct team sports:
- Prepares athletes with higher level skills for participation in school or community sports:
- Increases public awareness of the spirit and skills of individuals with mental retardation:
- Enables Special Olympics athletes' families to participate as team members or coaches on Unified Sports® teams:
- And enables athletes to develop friendships and an understanding of each other's capabilities through a spirit of equality and team unity.

How it Works

A Special Olympics Unified Sports® program can be conducted in a variety of settings:

- A program organized by a Special Olympics group
- A community or church sports program, such as an adult softball league or YMCA volleyball league
- An interscholastic or intramural after-school league at the junior high school or high school levels
- A part of the league system at a local bowling center
- An independent league sponsored by businesses or civic groups
- A program in cooperation with a local recreation and park association.

For more information about Unified Sports® contact the State Office Sports Department:
1/800 722-9004 918/481-1234 info@sook.org

DIVISIONING: Athletes are grouped by gender, age, and ability

Age divisions: 8 – 11, 12 – 15, 16 – 21, 22 – 29, 30 & above

Competition/ability groups: No more than 8 athletes or teams will be in any one competition group (called heats). Each heat is based upon entering scores. Hence, the need for training & practice!

Divisioning provides all competitors a chance to excel. All athletes who participate receive an award. Athletes are given awards based on order of finish – first through eighth place. There is only one first place winner per heat, but there may be several heats in a particular age group, giving many an opportunity to “win”.