



Coaching Duties, Responsibilities, and Expectations

Special Olympics coaches are role models whose behavior serves as a positive example for their athletes.

- They must provide the fairest and most positive training and competitive experience for every Special Olympics athlete.
- The coach must, above all, exhibit respect for the athletes, other coaches, volunteers, families and Games officials.
 - As a coach, your attitude toward sports and competition will directly affect your athletes.
- They must have positive interpersonal relationships, uphold the highest values and be honest, trustworthy and courteous to all persons at all levels of the organization.
- The coach accepts responsibility for the behavior of his or her athletes both in and out of the competitive arena while attending a Special Olympics event.
- A good coach realizes that the Special Olympics experience is not limited to competition.
- The most successful coach is one who focuses on the lifelong benefits the athlete receives.

Coaching Duties and Responsibilities

When you become a coach, you assume some legal responsibilities:

- Negligence – “occurs when you fail to perform a legally owed duty, as would a reasonable and prudent coach, with his/her failure resulting in actual damage that is a consequence of you breach of duty and that should have been foreseen.”

A coach has many important responsibilities, including but not limited to those outlined in the Volunteer Code of Conduct; additional responsibilities and duties are outlined below.

Training and Practices

The coach conducts training and practice of athletes for his/her selected sport. Athletes are taught basic fundamentals of each sport, including rules and regulations.

The coach is the **primary** contact person for each sport he or she is coaching.

- All communications (questions, issues, concerns, etc.) from parents/guardians will be brought to the coach for determination.
 - If the coach is unsure of a response, the question/issue is to be forwarded in a timely manner to the Training Director.
- The coach is to ensure that **all** athletes and/or parents/guardians are to be contacted regarding **any and all** practice changes or cancellations.

A Sports Binder will be provided to the coach by the Training Director; it will be returned to the Training Director at the end of the season with the athletes' scores for the season. Items included in the binder are:

- Coaches Quick Checklist.
- Athletes' applications/physicals.
- The sport's rules and requirements.
- The mandatory Attendance Policy for Seminole County.
- State Games Selection Requirements.
- Incident Report Form.
- Athlete Disciplinary Procedures.
- Athlete Misbehavior Report Form.
- Blank Trip Permission Form.

Approximately two months prior to the beginning of each season, the coach is to:

- Determine/confirm the practice venue with the Training Director.
- Coordinate and conduct a Planning Meeting. All coaches and volunteers should be present. Items to be discussed:
 - Appointment of an administrative coach, if needed.
 - Determination/confirmation of practice venue, dates, and times.
 - Preparation of the roster and attendance record.
 - Discussion of any divisioning issues.
- All Planning Meeting information will then be provided to the Training Director.

An informational meeting for athletes and parents/guardians will be held on a date prior to, or at, the first practice. All parents/guardians are to be provided with:

- Contact information for coaches and volunteers.
- The practice and competition schedules.
- Attendance Policy:
 - Parents/Guardians will sign an acknowledgment of receipt and understanding of the policy.
 - These acknowledgments will be maintained in the Sports Binder.
- Any additional necessary information.

Maintenance of the team's roster with athletes' contact and attendance information is the responsibility of the coach or administrative coach.

- A copy of the team's attendance record is to be sent to the Training Director no later than the 5th of each month for the previous month.
- Set up a Sign-In Table or Area at each practice.
 - Advise each parent/guardian that he/she must sign the attendance record in order to document the athlete's attendance at each practice.
 - This is also helpful in providing the parent/guardian with any additional or updated information.

Each coach maintains his/her athletes' records.

- The coach **must** have a copy of **each athlete's** application/physical **on hand** at **all practices and competitions**.
 - **No athlete will participate in practices or at competitions without a valid application/physical signed by a licensed physician.**
- Any issues regarding the athletes' qualifications are to be discussed with the Training Director.
- The athletes' performance records (scores) are to be maintained on a weekly basis.

The coach is also responsible for his/her sport's equipment (**including a first aid kit**).

- All equipment will be issued to the coach by the Training Director at the beginning of the season and returned to the Training Director at the end of the season.
- The equipment will be brought to each practice and competition.

Competitions

Coaches attend all competitions with their athletes.

- Games Rosters are prepared by each coach and provided to the Training Director by the stated deadline.
- The coach ensures all athletes and parents/guardians are aware of competition schedules and any transportation information.
- **The coach (or assistant/volunteer designate) is to know where all athletes are at all times.**

The coach is responsible for ensuring all athletes are provided with lunch and drinks.

- Water and/or sports drinks are permitted – **soft drinks and coffee are not.**

Uniforms will be issued to the coach by the Training Director at the beginning of the season and returned to the Training Director at the end of the season.

- Coaches are responsible for:
 - The distribution of the uniforms to the athletes **before** competition.
 - The collection of the uniforms from athletes **after** each competition.
 - Ensuring all athletes wear the proper clothing (Seminole County T-Shirt or collared shirt) to the event.

Coaches Training and Certification

Primarily, attendance at the various Seminole County coaches meetings is vital for obtaining additional coaching information on an on-going basis.

All coaches must undergo classroom and hands-on training and be certified within one year of becoming involved as a coach. Notification by email of upcoming training schools will be provided by the Coaches Training Director.

- Coaches must notify the Coaches Training Director for enrollment in any training schools.

Certification includes attendance at a General Orientation, a 90-minute presentation covering general aspects of Special Olympics:

- Its history, philosophy, organization and goals.
- People with intellectual disabilities.
- Special Olympics sports program.

The Protective Behaviors training material is a tool for protecting Special Olympics athletes from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. The training is required for all coaches.

- This link will take you to the online course at the Special Olympics state website; you will receive a completion notification by email:
<http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/English/Initiatives/protective+behaviors/default.htm>

Training Schools are held at various times throughout the year and throughout Florida.

- Sport-Specific Skills – A 4-6 hour training session providing basic knowledge, fundamental skill development, competition and game understanding, practice plans, and the application of the Special Olympics philosophy.
 - These schools give the coach the opportunity to learn, practice skills, and provide immediate opportunities to teach those skills to athletes.
- Sport-Specific Tactics – A 4-6 hour advanced training session providing advanced training principles, in-depth skill development, and competition tactics and strategies.

Certified coaches must renew their specific certification every 4 years by:

- Taking a more advanced level of training or
- Taking an approved non-Special Olympics course.
- Taking a CPR/ First Aid Course.

Documentation of all training and certification is the responsibility of the coach and must be provided to the Coaches Training Director for forwarding to the state office.

Coaching Expectations

The Seminole County Management Team expects the program's coaches to behave in the following manner:

- Understand each athlete's individual differences with respect to his/her disability.
 - **See the "Condensed Disability Fact Sheets" for information regarding how to positively interact and respond to the various disabilities displayed by our athletes.**
 - This form is located on the County's website, in Forms for coaches and volunteers.
- Provide:
 - For the general welfare, safety, health, well-being and appropriate conduct of the athlete while the athlete is in his/her charge.
 - Adequate and proper equipment.

- Be knowledgeable about:
 - All Special Olympics and National Governing Body competition rules and policies and to prepare their athletes prior to competition in accordance with these rules.
 - Emergency procedures and first aid.
- Ensure that all athletes:
 - Compete in events within his/her sport that challenge potential and is ability–appropriate.
 - Are dressed appropriately and safely prior to all training and competition.
 - Of similar ability are matched to ensure fair and safe competition.
 - In team sports have the opportunity to participate in every game.
- Be responsible for accurate assessment and qualifying scores that reflect the ability of the athlete.
- Evaluate athletes for injury or incapacity and ensure care is provided.
- Supervise **and participate** in all practices.
- Attend **all** scheduled coaches meetings.