



Date: January 15, 2021

To: SOAZ athletes, volunteers, families, and friends

From: Jamie Heckerman, CEO

Subject: Winter Sports Season Update

Special Olympics Arizona is dedicated to the protecting the health and safety of our athletes, volunteers, coaches, officials, staff, and all that contribute to the success of our athletes. In light of the widespread community transmission of COVID-19 and continuous spike in positive cases across Arizona in recent weeks, SOAZ is issuing further guidance and modifications for the 2020-21 Winter Sports Season:

- **The 2020-21 Basketball Season is CANCELLED**
 - After several conversations with local public health officials & experts, SOAZ has been advised that the nature of basketball as a contact sport, the close indoor quarters, as well as people traveling to different communities could lead to an increased risk for the spread of COVID-19.
- **The 2020-21 Cheerleading Season will be offered through a VIRTUAL model only**
 - Information about the structure of the virtual Cheer season is attached to this email or can be found under the "Season Updates" tab on SOAZ's Covid-19 Updates webpage. *For more information about participating in virtual Cheerleading, please contact Ryan Betcher at 480-433-3167 or Ryan@SOAZ.org.*

Please visit our website at <https://specialolympicsarizona.org/covid-19-updates/> for the most updated information & resources regarding SOAZ's Return to Activities action plan. On this page you will also find SOAZ's RTA County Status Dashboard, which is updated every Thursday afternoon and indicates which delivery model each individual county must operate under for the following week (Thursday – Thursday).

Stay in touch with us through SOAZ's virtual programming opportunities in sports & fitness, health & wellness, leadership, arts, social activities, and education. Join the SOAZconnected Facebook page and subscribe to notifications to find out how you can continue participating in SOAZ programs virtually.

- To further support our SOAZ family during this time, we have created a process for **requesting use of SOAZ's premium ZOOM account to host virtual delegation / team events** such as sports practices, team meetings, social activities, team hangouts, etc. Using SOAZ's premium account will allow hosts to access Zoom's premium features & events will not be limited to the 40-min maximum of free Zoom accounts.
 - **CLICK HERE to complete the online Zoom Request Form**
 - Requests must be submitted by a registered SOAZ participant (e.g., athletes, Unified partners, coaches, volunteers, etc.) and will only be approved for inclusive, Delegation / Team virtual events. Requests for personal use of the Zoom guest account will be denied.

SOAZ will continue working with everyone in our community to navigate this journey together through information and shared responsibility. We must do our best as individuals & communities to practice good hygiene and careful prevention strategies. Wash your hands often, wear a mask over your nose & mouth, and avoid contact with your face. If you do not feel well, please stay at home to protect yourself & others.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Jamie Heckerman
President & CEO
Special Olympics Arizona