



Special Olympics Arizona Coaches Certification Policy

The training mission of Special Olympics Arizona (SOAZ) is to provide appropriate, high quality, year-round sports training to each SOAZ coach. Training for coaches ultimately provides athletes opportunities to steadily improve sports skills, competitive ability and the opportunity to more actively participate in life.

Overview of Roles

Head Coach: A head coach is an 18+ year old volunteer who is responsible for completing paperwork, ensuring a safe practice environment, keeping accurate records on athletes, maintain communication with parents/guardians and setting up an eight week training session per sport.

Assistant Coach: An assistant coach is 16+ year old volunteer who assists with the assessment, training and maintaining records of athletes under the supervision of the Head Coach.

Coach: A coach is a 16+ year old volunteer who assists with the training of athletes under the supervision of the Head Coach and Assistant Coach.

Coach Certification Requirements

To achieve the goal of high quality training, Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) provides a certification program available to all Special Olympics coaches and has been adapted by Special Olympics Arizona to meet the needs of its coaches. To become a certified SOAZ coach, an individual must be 18 years of age or older and complete the following:

- Class A Volunteer Application Form
- General Orientation
- Protective Behaviors
- Sport Specific Training (Must be in the sport coaching)
- 10 practicum hours working with athletes
- Application for Sports Training Certification

Class A Volunteer Application Form: All prospective Class A (ADULT) Volunteers (including adult Unified Partners) must complete in its entirety the standard SOAZ Volunteer Application Form, which authorizes SOAZ to conduct a background check or any other means deemed appropriate to determine the suitability of a volunteer. The form includes specific contact information and other pertinent data is used only for the purpose of conducting screening. (i.e. date of birth, driver's license information, social security information) The form can be completed by visiting: <http://www.soaz.org/forms#volforms>. (This needs to be completed every 3 years in order to be certified)



General Orientation: General Orientation provides an overview of the Special Olympics movement and Special Olympics Arizona. This online presentation is designed for those who have an interest in providing sports opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The course contains information about Special Olympics philosophy, organization, rules and sports opportunities. The orientation is a required component of the volunteer Coach Certification Program. General Orientation can be completed by visiting: <http://www.soaz.org/coaches-training>. (This is a lifetime certification)

Protective Behaviors: The Protective Behaviors Course is an hour-long course covering appropriate behavior for coaches and athletes in regards to interpersonal relationships. This course is required for all coaches and Class A volunteers and can be completed online at: <http://www.soaz.org/coaches-training>. (This needs to be completed every 3 years in order to be certified)

Sport Specific Training: The Sport Specific Course is four to eight hours, designed for volunteers who intend to coach Special Olympics athletes. The course is required for becoming a Special Olympics Coach. Course topics include: athlete assessment, official events, rules and regulations, skills teaching, practice drills, competition preparation and training with Special Olympics athletes. Sport specific trainings will be held at the Area and State level. **Coaches must attend the in-person sport specific training in the sport they will be coaching.** Individuals with extensive prior sport knowledge may submit a **Coaches Certification Waiver** found on the Application for Sports Training Certification to the Support Services Office for consideration of certification without attending a training. (This needs to be completed every 3 years in order to be certified.)

New Coaches

Coaches and delegations starting involvement with SOAZ will have **one calendar year**, from the date their Class A Volunteer Background Screening is completed, to complete their sport specific training. A Class A Volunteer Background Screening, General Orientation Training and Protective Behaviors Training must be completed before volunteering as a coach in any capacity.

Head Coaches

All Special Olympics head coaches who were certified prior to January 2010 must become certified in Principles of Coaching by January 1, 2016. All new coaches after January 1, 2010 have six years to attain Principles of Coaching certification.

Unified Sports® Head Coaches

All head coaches of Unified Sports® teams must complete the Unified Sports Training. All new head coaches of Unified Sports® teams after January 1, 2010 must be Unified Sports® certified before coaching a Unified Sports® team.

Recertification

Advanced Sports Courses: The course is a sport specific course that focuses on development of higher-level sport skills, game/event tactics and strategies. It expands skill instruction and creates athlete performance enhancement. This course may be offered in a classroom setting by SOAZ.

First Aid/CPR Course: This six hours course provides individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize emergencies, access the Emergency Medical System, and provide basic care for breathing and cardiac emergencies and sudden illness or injury emergencies for adults, until advanced medical help arrives. A copy of the First Aid/CPR card must be submitted to the Support Services Office for approved recertification.

Online Sport Specific Recertification Quizzes: The recertification quizzes will consist of Special Olympics International Rules and Coaches Guides of the specific sport. The quiz must be passed with 90% correct to be recertified after two attempts. Please email Jamie@SpecialOlympicsArizona.org for the link to the specific sport quiz you are requesting.

Unified Sports® Course: This classroom course covers topics which include team selection, training strategies and competition guidelines for Special Olympics Unified Sports teams. All head coaches of Unified Sports® team sports must be Level 3 certified by taking the Unified Sports® course. Team sports include: softball, soccer, floor hockey, basketball, flag football and volleyball. The National Federation of High Schools offers the Unified Sports Training online, available here: <http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=36000>

Principles of Coaching Course: The Principles of Coaching Course is a highly interactive classroom course covering a range of topics related to coaching Special Olympics athletes. Drawing from examples in several sports, the course includes sections on coaching philosophy, planning, administration, sports psychology, injury prevention, and physical preparation of athletes. This course is strongly recommended for all coaches, especially for those serving as Head Coach or Coordinator.

Become a Trainer: SOAZ Athletes deserve the best training possible. The knowledge and experience of a veteran coach is invaluable to other coaches. In this level, coaches become a trainer and share those lessons learned and experiences encountered as well as coaching tips, techniques and theories with peers by hosting training sessions.

Officials Certification Course: The AIA (Arizona Interscholastic Association) is the governing body over sports rules and officials training for the state of Arizona. To become a certified official you must be 18 years of age and not in high school. For Classes and more information, contact the AIA by calling the AIA office in Phoenix at (602) 385-3774 or by going to their website at www.AIAonline.org. There is a fee for registering for the certification classes.

Other courses that satisfy Recertification:

- *Games Management Course*
- *Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course*

An Application for Sport Certification with practicum hours **MUST** be turned in with all recertification options.

Recognition of Certified Coach

Once a coach has completed the requirements for certification, he/she will receive a certificate from the SOAZ office in recognition of his/her accomplishment. The coach will also receive a Coaches' Credential/ID tag and SOAZ lanyard which will track what the coach is certified in and the expiration date on the certification. Upon completion of recertification the coach will receive a SOAZ "coach" t-shirt in recognition of their continuing education to provide the best coaching to Special Olympics Arizona athletes.

Volunteer Functions	Class A Volunteer	Must be 18 years of age	Volunteer/ Background Check Screening	General Orientation	Protective Behaviors	Sport Specific Training	Unified Sports Training	Principles of Coaching
<i>Certification Requirements</i>		<i>If taking on a Class A Role</i>	<i>Must be completed prior to volunteering</i>	<i>New programs and coaches have 1 year from starting involvement to complete</i>			<i>Before coaching a Unified Team</i>	<i>Within 6 years of Volunteer Background Screening</i>
Recertification Requirements			Every 3 years	None	Every 3 Years	Every 3 Years	None	None
Assistant Coach	X			X	X			
Coach	X		X	X	X	X		
Head Coach	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Unified Coach	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	