



Special Olympics Florida

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What is Special Olympics Florida?

Special Olympics Florida, Founded in 1972, is an affiliate of Special Olympics Inc. headquartered in Washington D.C. Special Olympics Florida provides sports training and Olympic-style competition to children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Currently, 15,000 athletes take part on an annual basis. Special Olympics Florida is a Level I Accredited Program (highest level of accreditation granted by SOI) and is divided into eleven geographic services areas, covering all of Florida.

Objective: Through successful sports training and competition, Special Olympics athletes develop physically, socially, and psychologically. The positive experiences that the athletes have in ongoing Special Olympics programs builds confidence and self-image which carries over into all aspects of their lives.

Training: Special Olympics Florida is founded on the philosophy that quality training is crucial to success in sports. Comprehensive year-round training and competition is available to every athlete, conducted by talented volunteer coaches. Training programs have been developed and implemented to improve athletes' overall physical fitness and sports-specific competence.

Games: Special Olympics Florida offers ongoing training and a series of sports competitions held at each organizational level, culminating in State Games. The State Games feature Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the lighting of the Special Olympics "Flame of Hope," awards ceremonies and a variety of social activities that are modeled after the Olympic Games. Over 200 county, area and state level games and tournaments are held each year in communities throughout the state.

Participation: 15,000 athletes 850 Coaches 18,000 volunteers

Sports:

Official Fall Sports:	Bowling, Softball, Powerlifting, Gymnastics and Roller Skating
Official Summer Sports:	Athletics, Bocce, Cycling, MATP*, Football (soccer), Tennis and Volleyball
Tournaments:	Aquatics, Basketball, Equestrian Sports, Golf, Skiing
Sports Offered at County or Area Level Only:	Horseshoes, Shuffleboard, Sailing

*Non-competitive **Motor Activities Training Program** for athletes with profound challenges. Unified Sports® combines athletes with and without intellectual disabilities to form sports teams for training and competition.

ALPs: ALPs (Athlete Leadership Programs) Programs allow athletes to explore opportunities for Special Olympics participation in roles previously considered "non-traditional." Special Olympics Florida athletes are serving as board members, serving on local/area committees, hosting sessions at Leadership Conferences, serving as officials, serving as coaches, working as volunteers, anchoring television productions and Special Olympics Florida has an athlete on staff. Special Olympics Florida currently has twenty-nine Global Messengers: a self-advocacy program where athletes are trained in public speaking and raise public awareness about Special Olympics.

Funding: Special Olympics Florida is a not-for-profit organization that is funded primarily through individual and corporate contributions.