



Coach Education System

The key to improving athlete performance and well-being is based on the quality of sport training and experiences provided by the local Special Olympics coach. Special Olympics Maine's Coach Education System identifies basic standards and competencies necessary and essential for being a Special Olympics coach.

Coach Description: Coach refers to an individual who assumes responsibility for athletes, actively trains athletes and works directly with athletes on the field of play. Coaches not only provide skills training for athletes but they are also role models and character builders. Coaches give Special Olympics Athletes the most immediate awareness of their own worth, ability, courage and capacity to grow and improve.

The better the coach, the better the opportunity, the better the athlete!

Minimum criteria to become a Special Olympics Maine Coach (head & assistant coaches - any individual, 16 & older, that will be attending & supervising Special Olympics Athletes at any SOME competition/event). To attend any Special Olympics Maine event, an individual must complete the following prior to their involvement:

1. Complete the SOME Volunteer A Form (must occur every three years) – [Click here to download SOME Volunteer A form.](#)
2. Complete the online Protective Behaviors (must occur every three years) - [Click here to complete the online Protective Behaviors course.](#)
3. Complete the online Concussion Awareness Course (must occur every three years) –
 - a. [Click here to complete the NFHS Concussion Awareness Course](#) or
 - b. [Click here to complete the CDC Concussion Awareness Course](#)
4. Adhere to SOME Coach's Code of Conduct - [Click here for SOME Coach Code of Conduct](#)

Minimum criteria to become a Special Olympics Maine certified head coach – Delegations are required to have a certified Head Coach at all State/Regional Level competitions for each sport specific team their athletes compete in. New delegations and existing delegations that need to replace a head coach will have 1 year to meet their delegation's head coach requirements.

Head Coach: (*Level 1 Coach Certification is required to participate in any State/Regional level SOME competitions*) Assumes overall responsibility for a delegation's sport specific team. They must be at least 18 years of age and a responsible individual who can commit time on a weekly basis throughout the respective sport season.

In the sports of Basketball and Soccer, delegations that have multiple teams must have a certified head coach for each of the teams competing from their delegation (i.e. A delegation brings 2 soccer teams to compete, each of their 2 teams must have 1 certified head coach in soccer).

In the sport of Alpine Skiing, any athlete that is currently training/competing through an adaptive ski program will not be required to have a certified Head Alpine Skiing Coach through their delegation, however, documentation of involvement through the adaptive ski program is required and Head Coach certification is still recommended.

Level 1 Coach Certification: To receive Special Olympics head coach certification, an individual must complete the following within 1 year upon entering as a coach:

1. Complete all criteria to become a Special Olympic Maine Coach
2. Complete General Orientation that provides a basic introduction to Special Olympics Maine. **(Soon to be offered online)**
3. Complete a course on the basics of teaching and coaching Special Olympics athletes - [Click here to complete online Coaching Special Olympics Athletes course](#)

4. Complete an approved course on teaching and coaching a specific sport (attend a face-to-face Coach's Training School).
5. Complete Sport Application(s) with 10 hours of practicum for Head Coach certification
6. Upon completion of the above steps a head coach will be certified for three years from the date of their last practicum session in the sport(s) of the skills course(s) completed.

To maintain or upgrade Head Coach Certifications

To maintain or upgrade a head coach certification, coaches are encouraged to move up the ladder of the current SOME Coach Education System. Maintaining or upgrading Head Coach Certification can be completed by one of the following:

1. To maintain current Level 1 certifications (Sport Specific) a head coach must complete the same sport specific skills course again for all sports currently certified in.
2. **Level 2 Coach Certification:** To upgrade all currently held Level 1 certifications for another three years a head coach must complete a Level 2 coach certification course. Level 2 Head Coach Certification should be achieved within 4 year of being a SOME Head Coach and both Level 2 courses should be completed within 6 years of being a SOME Head Coach. It is recommended to complete all sports certifications that the coach's team competes in prior to achieving Level 2 coach status:
 - a. Coaching Unified Sports – all teams that compete in Unified Sports must have a head coach certified in Unified Sports. [Click here to complete the NFHS Coaching Unified Sports course.](#)
 - b. Principles of Coaching – [Click here to register for Principles of Coaching course](#)
3. **Level 3 Coach Certification:** To upgrade all currently held Level 1 (all sport specific skills course completed that team participates in) and Level 2 head coach certifications (Coaching Unified Sports & Principles of Coaching) for another three years, unless stated otherwise in level 3 course, a head coach must complete an approved Level 3 course below:
 - a. Complete a sport specific tactics course (online or face-to-face)
 - b. Complete online course from the National Governing Bodies (i.e. Soccer =FIFA)
 - c. Complete an online American Sport Education Program (ASEP) course - [Click here to register for ASEP courses](#)
 - d. Complete National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS) course – [Click here to complete a NFHS course](#)
 - e. Positive Coaching Alliance - [Click here to complete a Positive Coaching Alliance course](#)
 - f. Responsible Sports and others
 - g. First-Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Course
 - h. Athlete Behavior Characteristics and Strategies to Improve Learning
 - i. Officials Training

Generally, any courses or professional development that help a coach become a better coach will be accepted.

4. **Level 4 Coach Certification:** To upgrade all currently held level 1, 2 & 3 head coach certifications for another three years a head coach can complete the Comprehensive Mentoring Program where a Special Olympics coach is partnered with a certified Special Olympics head coach who has been coaching for at least four years and has achieved at least Level 3 certification to be mentored. Certification for level 4 will be earned when the following **requirements** are met:
 - a. Accumulate a minimum of six participation hours with mentors.
 - b. Accumulate a minimum of 10 practicum hours in working with Special Olympics athletes.
 - c. Develop and submit three practice plans that include the essential and necessary components



Level 4 Comprehensive Mentoring

- minimum of six participation hours with mentors
- minimum of 10 practicum hours in working with Special Olympics athletes.
- Develop and submit three practice plans that include the essential and necessary components

Level 3 Coaching Tactics & Philosophy

Maintains all currently held Level 1 & 2 certifications for three years or for the life of the certification received. Must have completed both Level 2 courses. Complete one of the following:

- a sport specific tactics course (online or face-to-face)
- Complete online course from the National Governing Bodies (i.e Soccer =FIFA)
- an online American Sport Education Program (ASEP) course
- National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS) course
- Positive Coaching Alliance
- Responsible Sports and others
- First-Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Course
- Athlete Behavior Characteristics and Strategies to Improve Learning

Level 2 Principles of Coaching

Maintains all currently held Level 1 certification for another three years. Coach must have all of delegation's sport specific certifications needs prior to starting Level 2

- Complete all Level 1 requirements
- Coaching Unified Sports
- Principles of Coaching

Level 1 Sport Specific - 3 year certification

- Complete minimum Coach Requirements
- Complete Special Olympics Maine General Orientation
- Complete Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course
- Complete sport specific coach's training school

Minimum Requirements of All Coaches

- Complete Volunteer A Screening
- Complete online Protective Behaviors course
- Complete online Concussion Awareness Course
- Adhere to Coach's Code of Conduct