



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). Before serving as a Special Olympics Maine Coach each individual must first complete the 3 minimum requirements below (Head Coach must complete 5 minimum requirements). Each of the minimum requirements must be completed every three (3) years.

1. [Complete a Background Check](#) – (only required if 18 years or older) complete a background check online through Sterling Volunteers (free through August 31, 2020. Special Olympics Maine is requesting all previous and new Class A Volunteer & Unified Partners to complete a background check by August 31, 2020.
2. Submit [Special Olympics Maine Class A Volunteer & Unified Partner Registration Form & Release](#)
3. Complete [Protective Behaviors training](#) (only required if 18 years old and older)
4. Complete [Concussion Awareness & Safety Training](#) (Head Coaches only & only required if 18 years old & older)
5. 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 one of the following **requirements** are met:
 - a. Provide a Sport Specific Level 1 Coach's Training School (prior SOMaine approval required)
 - b. Accumulate six sport specific mentor hours with coaches

Special Olympics Maine Head Coach Progression

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

Level 1 Head Coach

- Complete minimum Coach Requirements
- Complete Special Olympics Maine General Orientation
- Complete Coaching Special Olympics Athletes or Athlete Centred Coaching Course
- Complete sport specific coach's training school & 10 hours of practicum with SO Athletes

Level 2 Head Coach

- Complete all Level 1 requirements
- Complete one of the following:
 - Coaching Unified Sports
 - Principles of Coaching

Level 3 Head Coach

- Complete all Level 2 requirements
- Complete one of the following:
 - Sport specific tactics course
 - National Governing Bodies (i.e Soccer =FIFA) course
 - American Sport Education Program (ASEP) course
 - National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS) course
 - Positive Coaching Alliance course
 - Responsible Sports and others
 - First-Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Course
 - Athlete Behavior Characteristics and Strategies to Improve Learning

Level 4 Head Coach

- Complete Level 3 requirements
- Must have 4+ years of Special Olympics Coaching experience
- Complete one of the following:
 - Provide a Sport Specific Level 1 Coach's Training School (prior SOMaine approval required)
 - Accumulate six sport specific mentor hours with coaches

Coach certifications expire every three years. All currently held Head Coach certifications can be extended another three years by completing the requirements of the next Head Coach Level. See example below:

Coach A has completed the minimum coach requirements & 2 Sport Specific Level 1 Head Coach course (Bocce & Swimming). Coach A's 2 Sport Specific Certifications (Bocce & Swimming) will expire on July 1st, 2019. Coach A has two options to maintain their Sport Specific Certifications:

- 1. Complete the requirements of Level 2 (recommended) – this will extend Bocce & Swim certifications until July 2022 or*
- 2. Complete the Level 1 Bocce & Swimming courses again – each certification will be extended another three years from the last date of the 10 hours of practicum submitted on each of the Sport Specific Head Coach Applications.*