

# Level 2 – General Information



Purpose of Course

Certification is good for **3 years**

Breakdown of Training

Video #1: Communication Tools & Considerations

Video #2: Competition Preparation & Health Programs

Video #3: Sport Specifics

Questions? Contact [CoachEducation@somn.org](mailto:CoachEducation@somn.org)



# Organizing a Training Session

1. Warm-Up
2. Review of previously learned skills
3. Introduce new skills & drills
4. Competition style
5. Cool down & review

# Communication Tools (cont.)



USE EASY  
WORDS



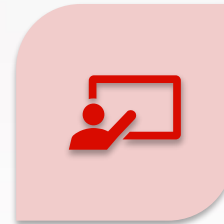
USE ONLY A  
FEW WORDS



USE  
PICTURES



DEMONSTRATE  
BY ACTIONS



GIVE POSITIVE  
REINFORCEMENT

# Assistance Levels



<b>Level of Assistance</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sport Example</b>
Verbal	Tell the athlete what to do	Footwork: “run forward to the line; then stop”
Demonstration	Show the athlete the what to do	Basketball: have athlete watch while someone else shoots a free throw
Partial Physical Assistance	Place the athlete in the proper position	Golf: coach adjusts the athlete's hands on the golf club with the correct grip
Full Physical Assistance	Help the athlete through the entire motion of the skill	Bowling: coach moves the athlete’s arm through the entire bowling movement

# Psychological Considerations



## **Motivation**

Goal: Help athletes maintain or grow interest

## **Perception**

Goal: Help athletes understand the sport in which they are participating

## **Comprehension**

Goal: Help athletes remember and perform the skill they have learned

# Social/Medical Considerations



## Seizures – How can I assist?

1. Create a safe space around the athlete
2. Protect the head and neck
3. Lay them on their side

Can someone with physical disabilities also compete in Special Olympics?

# Social/Medical Considerations



With many of our athlete's conditions, they may succeed more with performance tasks rather than verbal tasks. (ADHD consideration!!)

Approximately 20% of our athletes have an autism diagnosis, with about half also being non-verbal.

# Medical Considerations Table



<b>Diagnosis</b>	<b>Consideration</b>
Seizure Disorder	Be prepared to protect and observe the athlete should a seizure occur and minimize adverse affects
Autism spectrum disorder	Understand that athletes may engage in self-stimulatory behavior (hand-flapping, jumping, etc.), and that it is not necessarily a problem
Attention deficit/hyperactivity (ADHD)	Shorten drills and provide one-to-one assistance when needed
Down Syndrome	Family should ensure the athlete is screened for Atlanto-axial instability (see medical if necessary)
Fetal alcohol syndrome	Demonstrate clear performance tasks



# Preparing for Competition



Provide accurate qualifying times/scores, and skills assessment scores.

Make sure that you know the rules.

Teach your athletes the rules and, during training, phase out your verbal reminders about rules.

At competition, coaches may have little or no opportunity to assist athletes when they are not following the rules. (A coach cannot be on the track with them!)

# Preparing for Competition

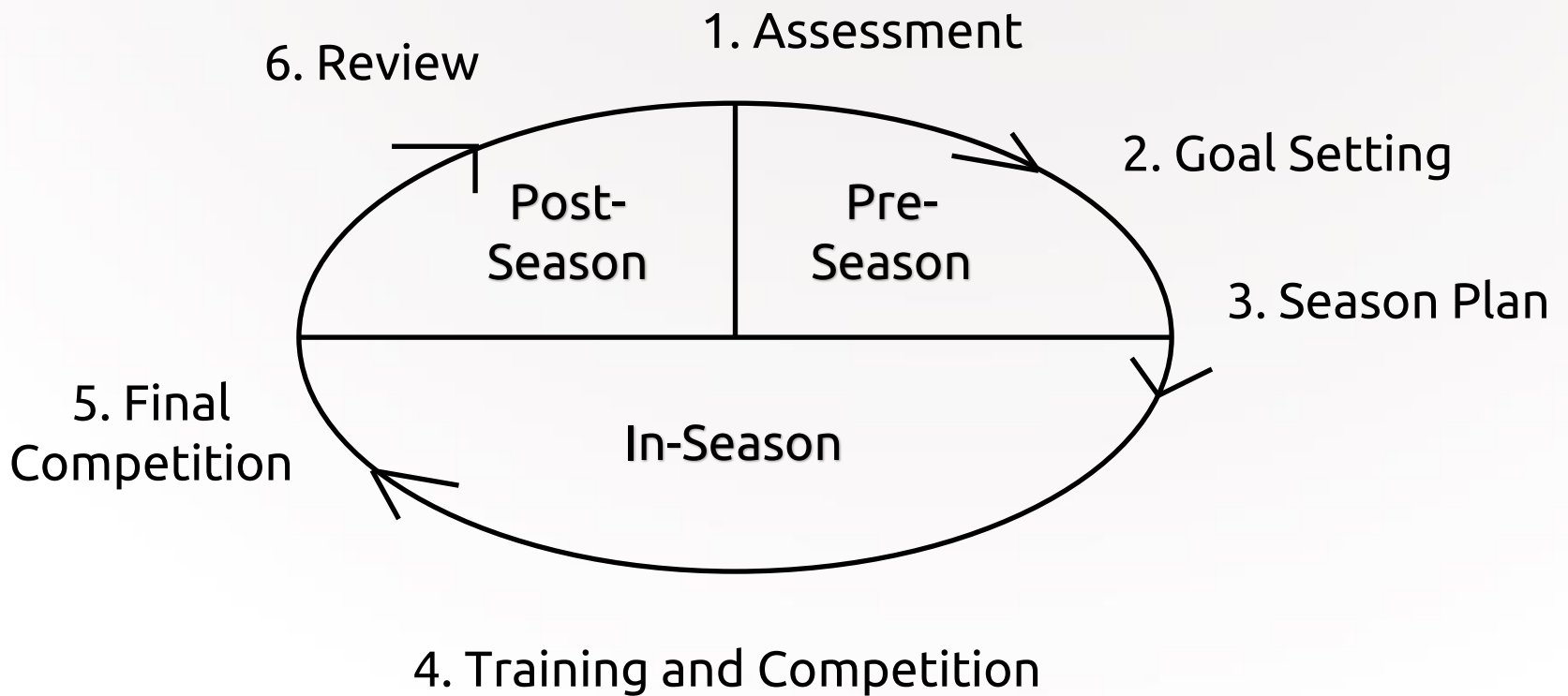


Create a supervision document to share with coaching staff!

There is a lot going on outside of the actual competition, including:

- Transportation
- Lodging
- Social activities
- Healthy Athletes
- Awards ceremonies
- Multiple events at the same time

# Season Cycle



# Competition-Day Coaching



Early arrival time – allows for more planning, getting uniforms ready, and understanding the venue layout

Check-in with athletes on attire and equipment

Set groundwork for how athletes should behave independently and focus on a growth mindset, even at competitions

When there is a reason, it is okay for you, as a head coach, to protest with an official in a calm matter. Seek to learn, not always to change!

# Managing Athlete Behavior



<b>Athlete Behavior</b>	<b>Strategies to Improve Learning</b>
Swimmer has a short attention span	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Focus on a stroke for short periods of time</li><li>2. Provide multiple activities focusing on same task</li></ol>
Basketball athlete yells if they miss a shot	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Emphasize the other parts of the game</li><li>2. Work on shooting drills without a hoop, then evolve to shooting at a hoop</li></ol>
Bowler doesn't wait for their turn	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have a coach at the lane help with the order of bowlers, explain whose turn it is</li><li>2. Emphasize that the bowler will always follow the same person</li></ol>

# Managing the Program



## **A successful Special Olympics coaching staff is:**

- Knowledgeable about the sport, rules, and competition details.
- An understanding of the mission of Special Olympics.
- Always recruiting new coaches and seeking opportunities to learn more about their sport.
- Focusing on including families, caretakers, and the community.
- Emphasizing safety and offering activities for all ability levels.

# SOMN Health Programs



## Fit5

- Plan for physical activity, nutrition and hydration
  - 5 fruits and vegetables a day
  - 5 bottles of water a day
  - 5 days of physical activity a week
- Fitness cards offer exercises to challenge abilities. These can be done at practice, the gym and home.
- Seasonal pledge challenges for teams offer incentives and resources.

# SOMN Health Programs



## **SOFit**

- Comprehensive health and wellness program focusing on four pillars of wellness: emotional, physical, nutritional, and social.
- Resources and funds provided to delegation or organization
- To learn more about Fit5 or SOFit, or get some of these resources, reach out to our Health Programs Coordinator!
- Jack Dobbs – [Jack.Dobbs@somn.org](mailto:Jack.Dobbs@somn.org)



# Level 2 Equestrian Session



This training will cover:

Rules of Competition

Event Details

Resources

If you would prefer to read the handbook, it is linked below this video, and covers the same information.

# Rules of Competition



## Spotters

- Appointed by the event director, will remain in strategic places in the competition area to act in case of emergency.

## Assistance

- Outside assistance, or rail side coaching, will be penalized at the discretion of the judges.

## Horses

- A rider must use the same horse in all events during the entire competition if it is their own.
- Change of horse is only allowed for safety reasons.

# Rules of Competition



## Tack

- All personal horses must provide their own tack and the saddles must fit the horse.
- Bridles must be appropriate to the class entered.
- Riders may in no way be attached to the horse or saddle.
- Bearing, side or running reins, blinders, and nose covers are all prohibited at competition.

# Judging



- Riders will be judged on the following:
  - Control of horse
  - Balance and seat
  - Proper use of aids
  - Ability to follow directions
  - Ring etiquette
  - Safety awareness
  - Sportsmanlike conduct
  - Walk/trot/canter
  - Stop, turn and backup

# Judging



- Credit is given to the horses navigating the obstacles correctly while responding to the rider's cue.
- Unauthorized assistance by a horse handler, coach, or side walker may result in a penalty to the rider.
- Penalties will occur if horses are three strides off gait within their designated class.
- Leaders are meant to keep horses in the patterns, not to lead through a pattern.

# Attire



- All riders must wear riding boots.
- All riders must wear protective SEI-ASTM or BHS approved helmets with a full chinstrap which must be always fastened when the rider is working around horses.
- Riding boots, a sleeved shirt, long pants, and a helmet are the only required attire.
- Please check page 5 of the Special Olympics Minnesota handbook for more items for English and Western events.

# Attire



- Biteless bridles may be used for Western competition.
- Nothing may extend below the horizontal plane of the mouthpiece other than a roller attached to the center of the bit.
- Reins must be attached to each shank.
- Riders must start and finish the class the same way.
  - For example, if the rider starts with a one-handed ride, they must finish with a one-handed ride.

# English/Western: Game



- Only A1, B1, and C1 riders may register for barrel racing or pole weaving events.
- Riders are required to start the course inside an enclosed ring and may not start until after all gates are closed and secured.
- All events are timed, and the winner will be the competitor with the fastest time.



# English/Western: Game



Reasons for disqualification include:

- Failure to follow the course.
- Failure to cross the start or finish line between markers.
- Failure to have the chinstrap on the athlete's helmet properly fastened for the entire time they are in the arena.
- Re-crossing the start or finish line after completing the course.
- Excessive use of a bat, crop, whip, or rope, as determined by the judge.

# English/Western: Showmanship

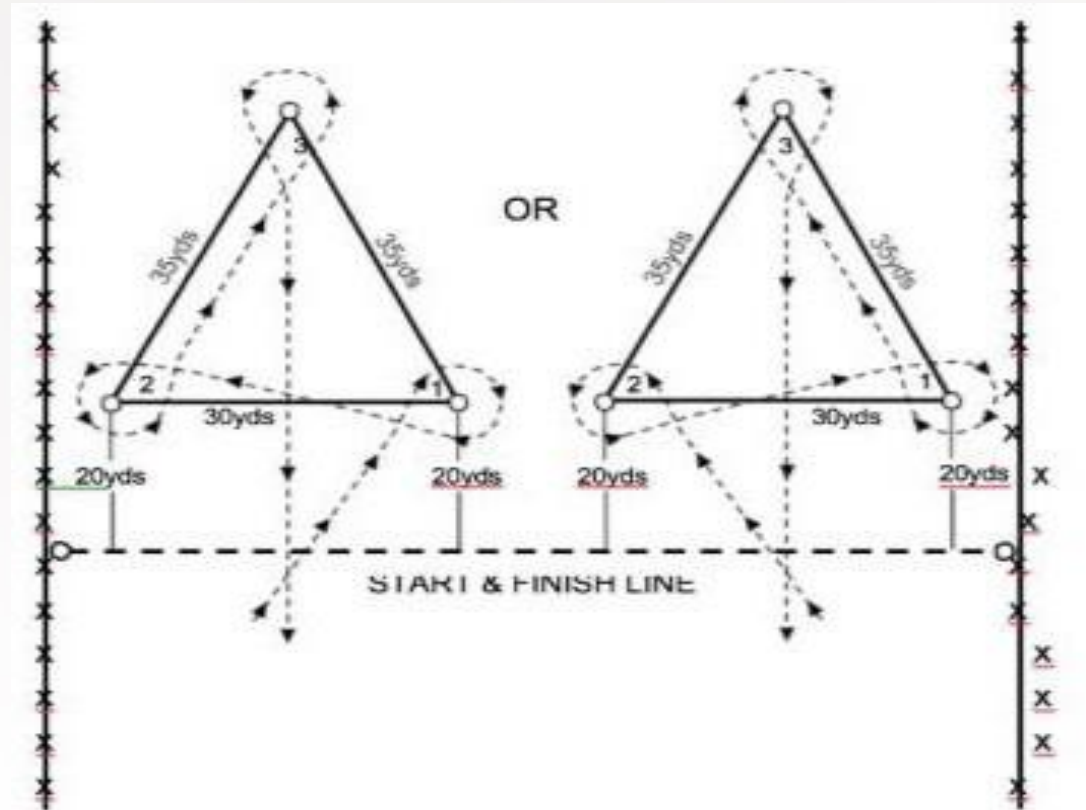


- Emphasis in class should be on the athlete's ability to handle and show the horse, with safety as the main consideration.
- In Western Tack style, athletes may use a halter and lead shank made of leather or nylon.
- In English Tack style, athletes may use a suitable English bridle or halter of either leather or nylon.
- The quarter method of showmanship will be used.
  - See page 8 of the Special Olympics Handbook for more information on this method.

# Barrel Racing



- Three barrels are set in a triangle.
- Barrel course can be run either right or left.



# Stock Seat Equitation



- Any or all riders may be required to execute appropriate tests included in the class requirements.
- Tests may be performed either collectively or individually.
- Individual patterns consisting of a combination or elements may be called for.
- Guidelines and fault information can be found on page 9 of the SOMN Equestrian handbook.

# Western Trail



- This contest is neither a stunt nor a race but should be performed with reasonable speed.
- Western Trail is a competition in the performance and characteristics of a good, sensible, well-mannered, free and easy moving horse.
- Horses will be judged on riding qualities of the gates and change of lead, and the athlete's ability to influence the horse.
- Guidelines and fault information can be found on page 10 of the SOMN Equestrian handbook.

# Divisioning



Equestrian athletes are not separated by gender or age.

Athletes are divisioned based on ability to perform a series of patterns with their horse.

Levels of competition:

- A1: walk, trot, canter independently
- B1: walk and trot independently
- BS/B3: walk and trot supported
- C1/B2: walk independently
- CS/C2: walk supported

# Registration



Registration is done online by head coaches or head of delegations.

When a coach registers their athletes and partners, they must submit the following:

- Level of competition.
- Coaches on the team.
- Updated paperwork for those that need it.

# Practice, Skill Development & Resources



- Special Olympics Minnesota wants to make sure that you have confidence in your knowledge of the equestrian rules.
- Below this video, you will find links to other resources available including:
  - SOMN Equestrian Handbook (includes event patterns)
  - SOMN Equestrian Page
  - SOI Equestrian Coaching Guide
- Any questions? Contact [sports@somn.org](mailto:sports@somn.org).