

# 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



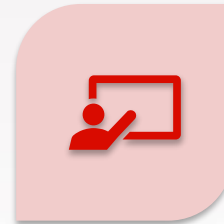
USE ONLY A  
FEW WORDS



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

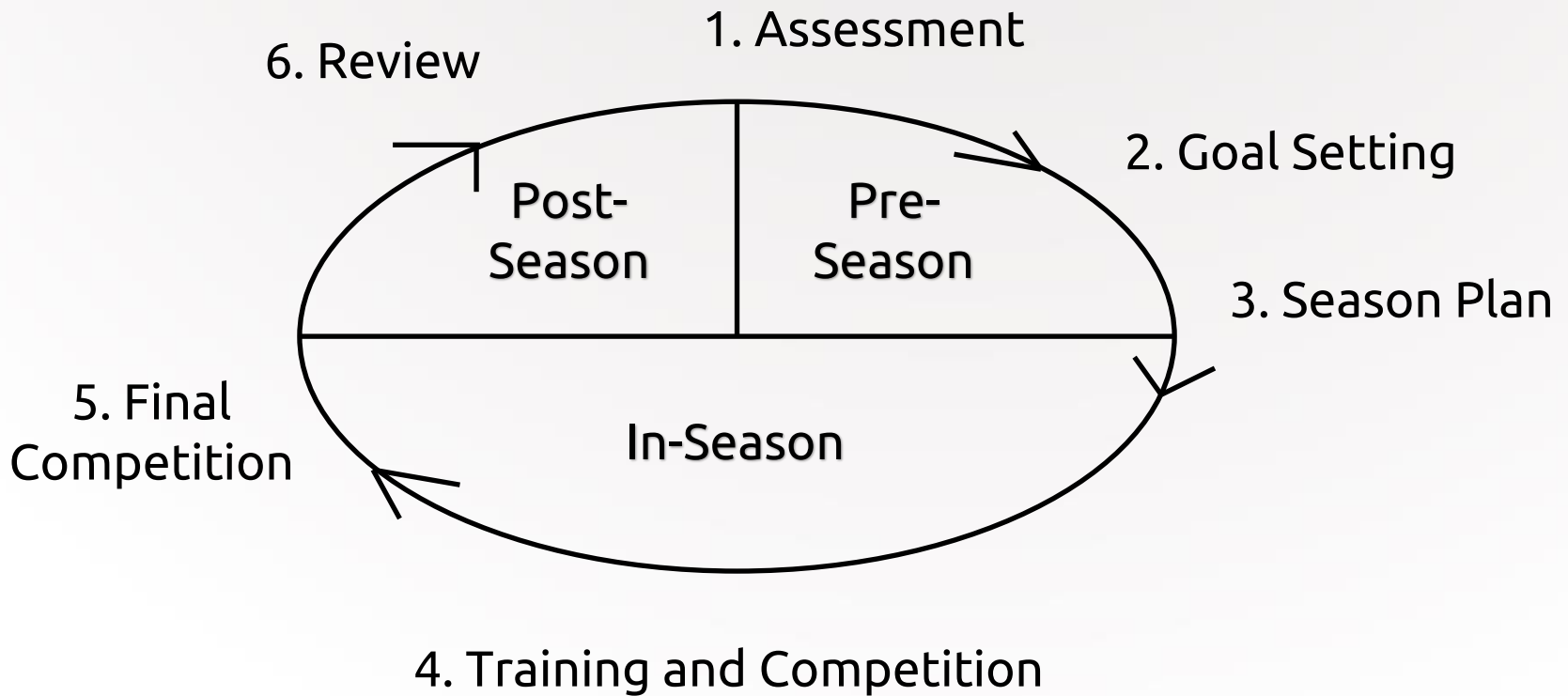


Create a supervision document to share with coaching staff!

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 Softball Session



This training will cover:

- Events we offer

- Rules of Competition

- Resources

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

# Events



Special Olympics Minnesota offers four different events to compete in for softball:

- Traditional Softball Team
- Coach Pitch
- Unified Softball Team
- Individual Skills

# Traditional Softball Rules



## Equipment

- Batters and runners must always wear helmets.
- Athletes who remove their helmet during play will be declared out.
- Catchers must wear a helmet, face mask and chest protector.
- No wood bats, metal cleats or jewelry allowed during competition.

# Traditional Softball Rules



## Game Length

- Games will be either 7 innings or a maximum of 70 minutes.
- No new inning will begin after 60 minutes.
- If a team has a 10-run lead or more after the completion of five innings, the game will be over.
- Extra innings will be played with a maximum of two extra innings.

# Traditional Softball Rules



## Roster

- Minimum of 11 athletes, and a maximum of 20.
- Teams can bat all athletes if the opposing team agrees to it.
- An extra 11<sup>th</sup> player can be used in the game as an extra hitter.
  - The extra hitter must play the entire game and must bat in the same batting order.
  - You may substitute for the extra hitter and place them in any defensive position, but the substitute will bat in the same position.
- Coaches are not permitted to be in the field of play.

# Traditional Softball Rules



## Gameplay

- There will be three outs per inning, or a maximum of 10 batters.
- After reaching two strikes, one courtesy foul will be allowed, but a foul ball after that will be the third strike and batter is out.
- While running the bases, athletes cannot be physically pulled or pushed to run in a certain direction by a coach.
- When there is a close play at a base, the runner should attempt to avoid unnecessary contact.

# Traditional Softball Rules



## Gameplay

- Players cannot lead off at any base and must stay on the base until the ball is hit.
- Due to the limited number of batters per inning, intentional walks are not allowed.
- Balls thrown out of the playing area are considered dead balls and play stops immediately.
- Protests are not allowed on judgement calls, only on rule interpretations.

# Coach Pitch Rules



## Gameplay

- A 6-pitch and 3-swing rule will be enforced.
  - After either occurs, the batter will be out.
  - Players cannot be walked.
- Coaches from the team batting will do the pitching and must stand on the rubber.
  - The defensive team will still field an athlete in the pitcher position, as the coach pitching does not field at all.



# Coach Pitch Rules



## Gameplay

- All other rules in coach pitch are the same as traditional.
- Athletes in coach pitch may use a tee when they are batting.
  - When registering, athletes using a tee must be noted.
  - Teams may only register half their roster for tee assistance.
- A 45-foot arc is marked from the first base line to the third base line.
  - If a ball does not cross the arc, it is considered a foul ball.
  - Players can rush the ball if it is still moving.

# Unified Softball Rules



## Roster/Gameplay

- Teams must be a minimum of 11 participants, with a maximum of 20.
- There should always be an equal number of athletes and Unified partners, as they alternate in the batting order.
- There is a limit of two over-the-fence homeruns per team.
  - If an additional homerun is hit, the ball is dead, the batter is out, and no runners can advance bases.

# Unified Softball Rules



## Gameplay

- Fielding positions must be balanced between athletes and Unified partners.
- Infield and outfield should each have two of each member, and the pitcher and catcher should have one of each member.
- Players at first base, third base, and pitcher are required to wear a helmet and facemask.
- All other gameplay rules are the same as traditional.

# Individual Skills Rules



- Provided for athletes who have limitations that do not allow them to play an entire game safely.
- Four events:
  - Throwing
  - Fielding
  - Base Running
  - Hitting
- Descriptions for these stations can be found in the Special Olympics Minnesota handbook on pages 7-9.

# Registration



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

Athletes are allowed to register for one event per competition. (\*Unified at state has additional opportunities, reach out to [sports@somn.org](mailto:sports@somn.org) with questions regarding those.)

When a coach registers a team, they must submit the following:

- Assessment score for each athlete.
- Coaches on the team.
- Updated paperwork for those that need it.
- Team Information Sheet

# Divisioning



Assessment scores are based on a ranking from the coach. Assessment sheets can be found [here](#).

Divisioning is based on many factors, including:

- Assessment scores.
- Results from previous regional and state competitions.
- Coach's notes.

Divisioning for team sports can be more difficult, so the more information that the state office can have, the better teams will be divisioned for competition.

# Practice, Skill Development & Resources



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