



COACHES EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION INFORMATION 2026

GENERAL INFORMATION

Volunteer Classifications:

Class A Volunteers (Coaches, Unified Partners and Chaperones):

- Volunteers who have regular, close physical contact with athletes
- Volunteers in a position of authority/trust or supervision with athletes
- Volunteers who handle substantial amounts of cash or other assets of the Program

Class B Volunteers (Day of Event Volunteers):

- Volunteers who only have limited contact with athletes

Age Requirements:

Head Coaches: Must be 18 years old.
Assistant Coaches: Must be 16 years old.
Unified Partners: Must be 12 years old.
Chaperones: Must be 18 years old.

*Volunteers ages 12-15 can be considered training assistants.

CLASS A REGISTRATION FORM

All Class A Volunteers are required to complete the Volunteer, Coaches, Unified Partner Registration Form and submit directly to Head of Delegation.

The Volunteer, Coaches, Unified Partner Registration Form can be found on our website at <http://sohawaii.org/get-involved/coaches/>

Please note: This form must be completed **PRIOR** to volunteering and be completed every 3 years.

CLASS A ONLINE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The following online trainings must be completed **PRIOR** to volunteering.

*Links to all Trainings can also be found on our website at <http://sohawaii.org/get-involved/coaches/>



General Orientation Online Training

The goal of this course is to give you general background/history of Special Olympics.

Who: All Class A Volunteers
Frequency: One time
Site Host: Special Olympics Hawaii

*After viewing the General Orientation video, volunteers must download, complete and email the quiz to soadmin@sohawaii.org.

Protective Behaviors Online Training

The Protective Behaviors Training Program is training aimed at preventing sexual abuse against Special Olympics athletes, as well as, ensuring the athletes' and volunteers' protection.

Who: All volunteers
Frequency: Every 3 years
Site Host: Special Olympics Inc.

*Upon completion of the course, you and the State Office will receive a completion email. Please keep a copy for your records.

Concussion Training Online Training

The goal of this course is the recognition, response and prevention of concussions.

Who: Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Head of Delegations
Frequency: Every 3 years
Site Host: National Federation of High Schools (NFHS)

*Upon completion of the course, you and the State Office will receive a completion email. Please keep a copy for your records.

Unified Sports Online Training

The goal of this course is to provide critical information on the Special Olympics Unified Sports Program.

Who: Head Coaches of Unified Teams (Softball, Soccer, Basketball, and Flag Football)
Head Coaches of sports that a delegation has Unified Teams (T&F, Bocce, Bowling)
Frequency: One time
Site Host: National Federation of High Schools (NFHS)

*Upon completion of the course, you and the State Office will receive a completion email. Please keep a copy for your records.



COACHES CERTIFICATION INFORMATION

Team Sports (Basketball, Flag Football, Soccer, Softball):

Each **TEAM** is required to have a Certified Head Coach. Delegations with multiple teams are required to have a Certified Head Coach for each team.

Individual Sports (Bocce, Bowling, Powerlifting, Swimming, Track & Field):

Each **DELEGATION** is required to have a Certified Head Coach.

Certification Validity:

Coaches' certifications are valid for three years.

Example: Certifications from a 2021 Coaches Clinic are valid for the 2021, 2022 and 2023 seasons.

Exemptions:

Exemptions may be granted in extreme circumstances, at the discretion of the SOHI Sports Director.

MAINTAINING CERTIFICATIONS

Certifications are valid for 3 years.

Completion of a relevant course at Special Olympics eLearn, or another, online source, with the PRE-approval of the Director of Sports, can be used to extend your certification for an additional 3 years.

- Basic Sports Specific Coaches Clinic (Any sport)
- Advanced Sports Specific Coaches Clinic (Any sport)
- Principles of Coaching Course
- <https://coachtube.com/course/coach-development/special-olympics-certification-course-principles-of-coaching/11813753>
- Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course
<https://coacheducation.humankinetics.com/collections/64>
- Approved non SOHI coaches training/course Heat-Illness Prevention Course
<https://www.nfhslearn.com/courses/heat-illness-prevention-2>
- Online Unified Sports Course
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/coaching-unified-sports>
- Online Concussion Training (cannot be used for 2 consecutive re-certifications)
<https://www.nfhslearn.com/courses/concussion-in-sports-2>
- Approved First Aid/CPR course (cannot be used for 2 consecutive re-certifications)

COVID exemption:

Any coaching certification that expired between July 2019 and July 2022 will be automatically extended with the attendance and completion of the next available coaches clinic, or approved training. These new trainings must be completed by May 2024 to apply. Any certification not renewed by May



2024 will be considered expired.

ATHLETE COACHES

In order to encourage the development of athlete leadership, Special Olympics Hawaii athletes can serve as sport coaches.

Once an athlete has expressed the desire to coach, the Head of Delegation and Head Coach for that sport must explain the process to the athlete and determine if the athlete is suitable to serve as a coach.

The HoD and Head Coach must consider:

- Athletes knowledge of the game
- Athletes age and maturity
- Athletes responsibility level and temperament
- Athletes ability to work with current teammates and coaching staff and serve as a role model
- Athletes ability to speak and/or communicate to other athletes and coaching staff
- Athletes independence level
- If there will be any issues with the team

The athlete must have:

- Good knowledge base of the sport they wish to coach. Usually, their experience will have come from playing this sport on a Special Olympics team.
- The ability to communicate with other coaches and athletes.

Approval Process:

- Guardian approval, if applicable
- The Head of Delegation may approve a request from an athlete AFTER speaking to all people involved.
- Once approved at the delegation level, Area Director must approve.
- Final approval will be given by SOHI Sports Director.

Mentor Coach:

- Athlete Coaches must have a mentor coach in order to proceed
- Mentor Coach must be willing to:
 - Attend the coaches clinic with athlete
 - Supervise athlete at ALL practices and competitions
 - Teach the athlete the skills to become a good coach
- The Coaching staff must understand that athletes are Assistant Coaches.



Requirements:

- Athlete Coach must complete all Class A volunteer requirements (form and trainings)
- Athlete and mentor coach must attend a coach's clinic in the sport the athlete will be coaching.

Athlete Head Coach:

An athlete may become a Head Coach, if they meet the following criteria:

- Has enough experience as a coach. SOHI recommends serving a minimum of 3 years as an assistant coach.
- Can understand the rules of the sport and SOHI requirements.
- Has the ability to handle aggressive/bad behaviors of athletes.
- Has the ability to handle unusual situations that may occur.
- Has the ability to be the decision maker at and after practices for athletes, such as:
 - Transportation issues
 - Medical issues, especially emergency procedures
 - Parent issues
 - Supervision of a large group of individuals
- A non-athlete assistant coach must always be present at practices and competitions, as a support staff for the athlete head coach. This assistant coach must have completed all Class A requirements and have knowledge of the sport.

Athlete Chaperone:

- Athlete coaches cannot chaperone other athletes or unified partners.
 - When traveling to competitions, the athlete coach will not count in the 4:1 coach:athlete ratio.
- If an athlete shows the ability to supervise other athletes, SOHI may approve of the athlete coach to serve as a chaperone on a case-by-case basis.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Where can I find the volunteer forms and online trainings?

A. All forms and trainings can be found at <http://sohawaii.org/get-involved/coaches/>

Q. Where can I find sports specific information?

A. To download Sports Specific Coaching Guides and Rules, Quick Start Guides, and General Coaching Guides, please visit: <http://sohawaii.org/resources/>

Q. What is the purpose of the Coaches Certification program?

A. To ensure that athletes are getting quality coaching, to recognize coaches for their dedication, and to create an identifiable standard of coaching within Special Olympics Hawaii.



Q. Do all coaches have to be certified?

A. No, only Head Coaches must be certified. Assistant coaches do not have to be certified, but it is highly recommended, as one certified coach must be present at all official competitions in order to participate.

Q. For team sports (Softball, Soccer, and Basketball), who needs to be certified?

A. Each team attending a State Games is required to have a Certified Head Coach in that sport.

Q. For Individual Sports (Powerlifting, Swimming, Track and Field, Bocce, and Bowling), who must be certified?

A. Each delegation is required to have a Certified Head Coach in that sport. Each relay, Bocce, or Bowling team does not need a certified Head Coach, just one per delegation.

Q. If I am certified in one sport, does that cover me for all sports?

A. No, certifications are sport-specific and based on the courses or clinics attended.

Q. How long does a certification last?

A. Your certification is valid for 3 years. Example: Certifications from a 2021 Coaches Clinic is valid for the 2021, 2022 and 2023 seasons for that sport.

Q. Are practicum hours required to become a Certified Coach?

A. No, practicum hours are no longer required.

Q. Who has to complete the new concussion training?

A. Concussion training is a mandatory on-line course for ALL coaches.

Q. How often do I have to complete the concussion training?

A. Training must be completed every 3 years.

Q. Who has to complete the Unified Sports training?

A. The Unified Sports training is mandatory for all Head Coaches of Unified Teams. This includes any sport where your delegation has Unified teams (including relays, Bocce and Bowling teams, etc.).

Q. Do I have to attend a sport-specific coach's course to re-certify in a particular sport?

A. No, there are many other educational options that can be used to get re-certified. You can re-new your certification by attending any clinic or course, or by attending other sports-related educational course.

Q. What if I cannot attend a clinic the day it is offered to get or renew my certification?

A. One year "grace periods" are allowed in rare circumstances, based on the discretion of the Sports Director. An official request must be submitted, with a valid reason. Delegations may only receive one exemption.



Q. What if my certified coach has an emergency and is unable to attend the State Games?

A. Another certified coach can attend as a substitute; however, the substitute coach must be an active, certified coach.

Q. How can I find out what certifications my coaches have?

A. The list of certified coaches is located on the SOHI website at <http://sohawaii.org/get-involved/coaches/>. Information about certifications can also be obtained by contacting your Area Director or by emailing sohiadmin@sohawaii.org. It is the delegation's responsibility to make sure their coaches have met the certification requirements prior to the start of a season.

Q. Can an Athlete become a Certified Coach?

A. Yes, please see the Athlete Coach section for more details.

Q. What if I couldn't recertify because of COVID restrictions?

A. Any coaching certification that expired between July 2019 and July 2022 will be automatically extended with the attendance and completion of the next available coaches clinic, or approved training. These new trainings must be completed by May 2024 to apply. Any certification not renewed by May 2024 will be considered expired.