



## 2008-2009 Special Olympics North Carolina Coaches Education Program



### **Purpose**

The purpose of coach certification is to ensure that each coach has the knowledge and tools to train athletes according to sport, safety and Special Olympics guidelines.

### **Coach Age Guidelines (SONC)**

Coaches must be at least 18 to be certified. Anyone ages 14 and over can attend a training school. Anyone 16 years old or older serving as a Class A volunteer (which includes all coaches) must take the Protective Behaviors training.

### **Coaching Status**

**Certified Coach:** For all individuals training athletes in a sport, certification as a coach consists of the following components:

- General Orientation – an introduction to Special Olympics and to the program and structure in North Carolina
- Protective Behaviors – education on how to recognize and handle signs of abusive behavior
- Sports specific skills course – specific instruction on the sport and modifications within Special Olympics
- 10 practicum hours – time actually spent training Special Olympics athletes

Coaches should complete all but the practicum hours prior to coaching Special Olympics athletes.

#### Implementation:

- Receive general orientation and protective behaviors training through one of the following formats:
  - 1) Receive training locally from the local program coordinator
  - 2) Download and submit the test forms from [www.sonc.net](http://www.sonc.net) in the Coaches section.
  - 3) Receive the training at the sport skill training school.
- Attend a training school for the sport skill.
- Complete the Application for Coaches Certification (coaches must give SONC their Social Security Number and date of birth as background checks are performed on all coaches.)
- Complete 10 practicum hours actually working with the athletes within one year of attending the training school. The purpose of this requirement is to prove that the coach has indeed used the training she/he has received.

**Advanced Certified Coach:** Required training for an Advanced Certified Coach consists of the following:

- All Certified Coach Requirements
- Coaching Special Olympics Athletes (CSOA) – a more in-depth training about how to work with Special Olympics athletes, recognize and accommodate their needs in the sport, and provide them with an effective sport training and competition experience
- Principles of Coaching (PoC) – education regarding the sport management team approach to recruitment and sport development, how to enhance athlete performance, and application of basic principles of coaching

#### Implementation

- Receive the CSOA and PoC training through one of the following formats:
  - 1) Download and submit tests from the SONC Web site at [www.sonc.net](http://www.sonc.net) in the Coaches section.
  - 2) Receive the training at a training school. This must be specifically requested.



### Enforcement at State-Level Events

In order to emphasize the importance of well-trained and knowledgeable coaches, requirements will be in place for all sport coaches and Heads of Delegation attending state-level events.

- Programs must have the following. A \$50 fee will be charged to the local program for each coach they are lacking. Any online tests must be received by the Coaches Education Sports Director by the registration deadline of the state-level event:
  - At least one Certified Coach per team attending the event. "Team" refers to teams in basketball, floor hockey, soccer, softball, and volleyball and cheerleading squads.
  - At least one Certified Coach for every 10 athletes for individual sports. We will round down for fees (i.e. 32 athletes, only 3 Certified Coaches required).
- Program must have at least one Certified Coach in each sport in which they are participating in order to bring athletes to a state-level event in that sport. Participation will otherwise be denied. A one-year grace period will be allowed for a local program starting a new sport.
- All Heads of Delegation must have Protective Behaviors Training and General Orientation. The fee for not meeting this requirement will be \$50 per person. Any online tests must be received by the Coaches Education Sports Director by the registration deadline of the state-level event.

**Certified Clinician:** For individuals interested in conducting sport-specific training on behalf of SONC. Certification as a clinician consists of the following components:

- All Advanced Certified Coach Requirements
- Making Effective Presentations - a course designed to train individuals on how to properly conduct an effective training session which is informative for the participants

### Implementation

- Receive the Making Effective Presentations training. This must be specifically requested from the Coaches Education Sports Director and will be provided on an individual basis.
- A training session time and location must be scheduled to which any coaches in the area (i.e. Southern Piedmont Area) are invited.
- SONC will designate someone to co-present/evaluate this first session. Final approval as a Certified Clinician will be granted pending the outcome of the training session.
- The Certified Clinician will be added to the list of clinicians available to offer training schools in the area in future program years.
- All future training sessions must first be approved by the Coaches Education Sports Director or participants will not receive credit for the training.

Please note that SONC will not recognize any training schools conducted independently which do not follow the guidelines above.

### Recertification

The purpose of recertification is to ensure that all certified coaches continue to stay up to date in terms of sport-specific rules updates and new techniques as well as to enhance their coaching skills. Recertification will be sport-specific in order to meet this purpose.

Special Olympics, Incorporated requires that starting in September 2009, all coaches be recertified every four years in order to remain a certified coach in Special Olympics. Announcements regarding recertification will be made at the 2009 SONC Leadership Conference.



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### **Incentive Program**

SONC realizes that recognition is an important part of any volunteer program. In February 2009, SONC will recognize all Certified Coaches and Advanced Certified Coaches.

Distribution plans are as follows:

- Each person will receive one item when they reach the Certified Coach status in the first sport (certification in multiple sports will be recognized by the certificates which currently go out) and one item when they meet the criteria for an Advanced Coach. This means that all current Advanced Certified Coaches will receive both recognition items during this initial distribution.
- Tentative plans for recognition items are "Certified Coach" credential pouches for Certified Coaches and an "SONC Coach" T-shirt for Advanced Certified Coaches.
- All qualifying coaches will receive correspondence in late 2008 to which they must respond before a recognition item will be sent to them.
- It is SONC's intention to annually distribute recognition items to coaches moving forward (rather than throughout the year).

### **First Aid/CPR Training**

First Aid/CPR Training is valuable education for coaches. Although it is not currently required for certification with SONC, SONC will provide a \$15 supplement for coaches who successfully attend a CPR/First Aid course offered by American Heart Association or American Red Cross and provide a receipt and a copy of the issued card. Local programs and/or coaches are responsible for making their own arrangements to register for and attend classes. Online classes are now offered by the American Red Cross.

### **American Sport Education Program (ASEP)**

Special Olympics North America has formed a partnership with ASEP for online coach's courses. These sport-specific courses can be used as tactics courses to further the coach's knowledge of the sport. SONC will reimburse \$15 of the \$30 fee for coaches who have successfully completed the course and provide a receipt.

### **Future Timeline**

This program is for 2008-2009. SONC will continue to work towards increasing education for coaches and implementing future requirements to improve on the quality of the sport program. It is also SONC's intention to work on improving the quality of training materials and training schools provided to coaches to ensure that they are informative and relevant.

### **Contact Information**

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