

2016-2017 Sport/Organizational Updates/Reminders

Health and Fitness Programming

Local programs will now receive notification after a state-level event of athletes who experienced any Healthy Athletes screening and have some form of recommended follow-up care. This will be one of the steps to ensure that the athlete and his/her caregiver are made aware and are ideally positioned to get this care.

As SONC increases its efforts to ensure that health is part of the sport experience for all athletes, an 8-week fitness program will be released this fall for local programs to include in their offerings.

Sport Calendar

A tentative calendar for 2016-2017 has been shared to give an idea of what is already being planned for this next program year. Please note:

- State-level event dates are set.
- Some additional competition opportunities are noted like Adaptive Tennis Association of NC.
- If an event is listed under a month but with no specific date, it means that all details are still being worked out and it will basically happen in that season.
- We want to capture all multi-county events that are taking place so please share plans back to us throughout the year.
- This document is intended to give programs a snapshot of plans for the program year but you should always reference the calendar on the web site for the latest version. Significant changes to the calendar will be noted on the Updates page of the web site.

Unified Sports

Additional competition opportunities are being created for Unified Sports. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2017-2018 program year.

There are already more and more opportunities for Unified Sports as it is intended to provide additional competition, not replace traditional competition. This includes sports offered through SO College for the young adult athletes as well as the activity in public schools across the state.

Standard Email Addresses

In order to have more consistent communications, SONC has assigned each local program a standard email address (i.e. johnston@sonc.net, wake@sonc.net, etc.) These email addresses will be published on the local program pages on the SONC web site. They will be used for all correspondence from SONC to local programs.

These email addresses serve as an alias which means they direct all email to the coordinator's original email address; there is not another email inbox for you to check! This does not impact any firewalls, setup, anything else you may have associated with your current email address (like in school systems where this can be an issue) and there is no action required on the part of the program other than starting to use this email address in all publications to the public.

All email addresses will be directed to the coordinator's email; not the co-coordinators.

Training and Communication with Local Programs

Regional webinars have been scheduled for this next year. Networking opportunities will be held separately.

A series of event training webinars are also being offered to assist local programs.

Financial Reporting

In an effort to re-establish regular reporting back to local programs, please find a financial reporting timeline included with this document. SONC is committed to:

- Providing local programs with bimonthly reports with pooled bank statements

- An annual update on local program investments where applicable
- Notice prior to any changes with investment funds (monies moved from checking to investments and vice versa).

Athlete Participation Forms

We have received a new version of the form very recently but we will be spending the next year looking at how to implement. Keep doing what you are doing and we will have lots to share on this at next year's conference.

Spring Games Registration

Thank you to those programs that submitted their registration lists for spring games (and any other local even you are hosting). SONC will continue collecting these lists in order to better capture activity at the local level and we will be following up with programs throughout August to finish collecting information for the 2015-2016 program year.

Training Rosters & Quota for State-Level Event

The timeline has been provided for each state-level event. It will be identical to last year's timeline. In our second year of using this system, requirements and deadlines will be more strictly enforced and some new measures are in place to ensure the appropriate information is captured to adequately plan for state-level events. These include:

- All athlete participation forms must be submitted along with training rosters. Any athlete lacking an updated form by the time registration is submitted will not be allowed to register for the state-level event.
- If a local program requests quota slots and then does not use them when registering for an event, there will be a \$50 quota scratch fee assessed for each person.
- In cases where requests outnumber the slots available in a sport, quota will continue to be done based on percentages. **For team sports, however, a full random draw will be conducted.** This means that a local program may not be represented in that team sport (i.e. Jones County may not get their one team slot because Wake County had two team slots randomly drawn instead). This is done to ensure that all teams no matter from what size program they come will have an opportunity to be selected.

Coaches Education Chart

A chart has been provided to better spell out the coach trainings that are required and available. Concussion training and Coaching Special Olympics Athletes are required to become a certified coach.

In-Person Training Opportunities

If you would like to offer some trainings for a group of your coaches, you can request Coaching Special Olympics Athletes and Making the Most Out of Your Practice which is a non-sport specific training that focuses on the elements of an effective training session, and then coaches put together a practice with a group of athletes. We think it is so great, we will come to you! SONC Sport Staff or volunteer trainers will meet with your coaches pre-season so they can use what they start their season with new energy and new tools. Contact your regional sport director ([Joseph Glenn](#) – East, [Lauren Saulter](#) – West) for more information.

Maximum Effort Rule

This rule will still be in place for aquatics and athletics at state-level competition. This rule is in place to ensure accuracy in order to provide competitive divisions for the athletes.

This rule was first implemented at the 2016 SONC Summer Games and there are definitely improvements to be made. SONC will be making the following adjustments:

- For certain levels in certain sports (one example is Level 1 aquatics) the percentages have been adjusted.
- We'll continue to train our competition management on how to apply this rule fairly.
- There will be the full implementation of a notification system at each venue. This means that notification will go out about all DQ's before awards are presented.

Sports Information

All of the sport web pages have been updated with rules, etc. Webinars will be posted by the first of August to supplement this information and available throughout the year. You are encouraged to have all of your coaches view this webinar!

Event & Sport Updates

Equestrian Tournament

Hunt Horse Complex, Raleigh

September 30-October 2, 2016

- English classes will start, followed by Western.
- For the 2016-2017 program year, the test patterns for showmanship and trails will be Test #6, and dressage and western riding will use Test #2. These patterns are posted on the equestrian web page.
- Additional competition opportunities are being created for Unified Sports. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2017-2018 program year.

Fall Tournament

High Point

November 4-6, 2016

State-Level Event Update: Traditional 3v3 and Masters 3v3 competition will take place at Fall Tournament. Competition for team 5v5 will occur in the 2017 Fall Tournament.

General Basketball

- Socks do not need to match.
- Rosters may change from training roster to registration, but must remain consistent after games registration.
- A uniform check will be administered before each game by the officials. Non-compliance of uniforms is not protestable. If a team does not follow the uniform regulations, officials will enforce and assess penalties prior to tip-off.

3-on-3 Team Competition

- Defensive players must allow an arm's length of space for the offensive team to in-bound the ball (same as 5-on-5 rules stating that defensive players cannot reach to slap or crowd the offensive player in-bounding the ball). This space applies on all sides of the inbounding player. The foul line to the X is a good rule of thumb for the distance that should be allowed.

5-on-5 Team Competition (Fall Tournament 2017)

- If a team leads by 20 points or more, a running clock will occur for the rest of the game. The clock will only stop for time outs or at the request of an official.

Bocce

- There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.
- Additional competition opportunities are being created for Unified bocce doubles and team. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2017-2018 program year.

Golf

- Level 4 and 5 athletes will continue to use the Golf Handicap Index Network (GHIN) to submit scores. In order to have an accurate handicap, players should enter **all** scorecards into this system.
- In order to compete in level 5 at Fall Tournament, an athlete must have an average of 120 or lower in the GHIN.
- Additional competition opportunities are being created for Unified Sports golf levels 2 and 3. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2017-2018 program year.

Roller Skating

- An intermediate category is now offered. Please refer to the sport notes for specifics.
- Athletes may compete in a maximum two individual events, one two-person relay and one four-person relay event.
- Time maximums will be in effect for the 50m half-lap, 300m, 500m, and 1000m. This is similar to cycling. Please refer to the sport notes for specifics.
- The order of events has changed for Fall Tournament. Please refer to the sport notes for specifics.
- It is recommended that athletes register for events shorter than an event where they cannot complete it in the time allowed. For example, an athlete not able to complete the 300m in 2 minutes or less will be recommended to register in the intermediate category. Coaches should take extra caution in order to correctly assess athletes during training, as athletes will not be allowed to switch events at Fall Tournament.

Soccer

- There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.
- Team quota slots will be allocated on a random-draw basis. This means that a local program may not be represented in that team sport (i.e. Jones County may not get their one team slot because Wake County had two team slots randomly drawn instead). This is done to ensure that all teams no matter from what size program they come will have an opportunity to be selected.

Tennis

- SDT recommends athletes rated 5.0 or lower (or transitioning from short court to full court) practice and compete using the green dot tennis ball.
- Level 4 Tennis is played on a full court, but is played with a low compression "Green Dot" tennis ball and is designed to provide a transition from Short Court Tennis to Full Court Tennis. .
- A rating must be submitted for each athlete for Fall Tournament registration. All athletes must participate in divisioning on Friday of Fall Tournament in order to compete in their events. Divisions will be set on the basis of their rating as well as play on Friday. A tennis rating score must be submitted for each athlete on the summary form with the appropriate event registration form.
- Additional competition opportunities are being created for Unified Sports. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2017-2018 program year.

Winter Games – Alpine Skiing & Snowboarding

Appalachian Ski Mountain

January 8-9, 2017

There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.

Winter Games – Figure Skating

Huntsville, Alabama

February 4-5, 2017

State-Level Event Update: Special Olympics Alabama will host Southeast Figure Skating in February 2016. Special Olympics Virginia will host speed skating competition at their SOVA Speed Skating Championship March 4-5, 2017 in Richmond. Therefore, programs with athletes training and competing in these sports may attend the out of state events, and SONC will share the delegation costs associated with this event.

Figure Skating

- The dance rotation schedule for Ice Dancing has been updated through 2018. Athletes and pairs will perform two compulsory dances at competition.
- In 2017, the dance rotation is as follows:
 - Level 1: Rhythm Blues & Dutch Waltz
 - Level 2: Fiesta Tango & Cha Cha
 - Level 3: Willow Waltz & Hickory Hoedown

- Level 4: Foxtrot & Fourteen Step

Speed Skating

There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.

Summer Games

Raleigh, NC

June 2-4, 2017

Aquatics

- The order of events has changed. Please refer to the aquatics web page for an updated Summer Games order of events, as well as a suggested order of events for invitationals.
- For distances greater than 500 yards (with the exception of relays), the referee or designee will ring a bell 55-yards prior to the completion of the race.
- In events 25 yards and shorter, the maximum effort threshold will be set to 25%. In events 50 yards or longer (including all relays), the maximum effort threshold will be set to 20%. Any athlete or team that exceeds the percentage may be subject to disqualification based on the maximum effort rule.
- Level 1 athletes will have the option at Summer Games to participate in a 4x25y freestyle relay. This exhibition relay will occur during the Level 1 events on Saturday afternoon, and will be done for practice only (they will not be awarded placement awards). Athletes must be able to complete the 25y on their own or with the assistance of a floatation device, without a coach in the pool.
- Additional competition opportunities are being created for Unified Sports. Unified Sports relays will not be offered at aquatics in Summer Games. Unified Sports relays are encouraged to attend invitationals, specifically the Guilford/Greensboro Aquatics Invitational in April. Unified Sports relays will be awarded Unified Sports placement awards.

Athletics

- There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.

Bowling

- It is the hope of SONC to provide competition for **all levels of bowling competition at the 2017 Summer Games**, including traditional doubles and team as well as Unified doubles and team. This decision will be made once the SONC Board of Directors has approved the 2017 budget in December.
- Final placement for all levels at Summer Games will be determined by the **combined scores** from Saturday and Sunday.

Singles & Ramp

- Open format vs. League format: Athletes competing in singles with an average of 70 or below will bowl in open format (no lane switching). Athletes competing in singles with an average of 71 or above will bowl in league format (will switch lanes).
- Number of games: Athletes competing in singles or ramp with an average of 70 or below will bowl two games on Saturday and two games on Sunday. Athletes competing in singles or ramp with an average of 71 or above will bowl three games on Saturday and three games on Sunday.

Doubles and Team

- Doubles and Team will continue to use Baker Format.
- Doubles will bowl four games on Saturday and four games on Sunday.
- Team will bowl five games on Saturday and five games on Sunday.
- Additional competition opportunities are being explored for Unified Sports bowling. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2017-2018 program year.

Cheerleading

- There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.
- Additional competition opportunities are being explored for Unified Sports cheerleading. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2017-2018 program year.

Cycling

- There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.

Gymnastics

- The Sport Development Team highly recommends at least 12-16 weeks of training prior to Summer Games.
- There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.

Powerlifting

- There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.

Softball

- There are no event or rules changes for 2016-2017 at this time.
- Team quota slots will be allocated on a random-draw basis. This means that a local program may not be represented in that team sport (i.e. Jones County may not get their one team slot because Wake County had two team slots randomly drawn instead). This is done to ensure that all teams no matter from what size program they come will have an opportunity to be selected.

Volleyball

- Touching any part of the net it is a fault while playing the ball is a fault.
- For clarification: During competition, the lineup shall never exceed three athletes and three partners at any time. After the match begins, only the following line up is allowed:
 - 3 athletes and 3 partners, or
 - 3 athletes and 2 partners (in the event of injury or illness).
 - Failure to adhere to the required ratios results in a forfeit.
 - For example, a team can start with three athletes and three partners on the court, but if one of the partners becomes injured or ill and cannot continue, and the team does not have a partner substitute, the coach could substitute an athlete or play short one Unified Partner.
- Team quota slots will be allocated on a random-draw basis. This means that a local program may not be represented in that team sport (i.e. Jones County may not get their one team slot because Wake County had two team slots randomly drawn instead). This is done to ensure that all teams no matter from what size program they come will have an opportunity to be selected.

Locally Popular & Recognized Sports

SONC has classified two sports as “locally popular”. Those sports are sailing, and tee-ball. As a locally popular sport, the local program opts to start this sport strictly at the local level keeping the field services and sport director informed of participation.

Tee-ball team competition will not be offered at Summer Games, but local programs are encouraged to start a team, and should contact Lauren Saulter at lsaulter@sonc.net for more information.

Tee ball competition will follow all slow pitch rules and regulations, with the exception of the following rules that are only specific to Tee-ball:

- A regulation game consists of six innings, however will not last longer than 60 minutes with no new innings beginning after 55 minutes.
- Any ball that is not hit beyond the neutral zone 45’ from home plate will be ruled a foul ball.
- A defensive coach will be located on the field of play, directly behind second base in a designated circle.

Flag Football is a recognized sport with SONC, and a flag football sport development team has been formed to be a resource for coaches and local programs. The flag football SDT has provided a [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) to provide more information on starting flag football.

An online interest and “quick start” coaches training will occur on Thursday, September 22 at 6:30pm. This will give interested coaches and coordinators a chance to learn a little more about the sport, ask questions of the sport development team, and potentially make connections with other coaches to schedule friendly

competitions. Register by clicking this link or typing it into your web browser window <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/3060469001200509186>.

Competition Opportunities Outside SONC

Local programs interested in or currently training athletes in locally popular sports are welcome to travel to competitions outside of North Carolina. Some examples of these opportunities are sailing regattas hosted periodically by Special Olympics South Carolina. We are seeing an increase in regional and national competition opportunities for Special Olympics athletes and Unified Partners. We highly encourage local programs to take advantage of these events. Information will be posted on the appropriate sport page.

Some states have competition in Unified Sports that SONC does not offer. Local programs may opt to participate at their own expense.

Programs must work with the field services director to ensure local funds are sufficient and registration is properly completed.

Reminders

Uniform Reminders

Adhering to the uniform and equipment rules for each sport serves two main purposes: ensures the safety of players and legitimizes their participation in that sport. Programs either purchasing new uniforms, or receiving donated ones, are encouraged to contact the sport staff to ensure those uniforms will be appropriate for competition.

Sportsmanship

It is increasingly important for all of us to constantly remind ourselves of the importance of sportsmanship. We all represent Special Olympics at practices, events, and on the field of play. The athlete oath emphasizes the key role good sportsmanship plays in Special Olympics by stating "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

SONC will continue emphasizing the importance of good sportsmanship for everyone involved including families, athletes and coaches.

Team Captains

There are so many athletes who are capable of taking on a leadership role in their sport. Although we encourage them to become coaches, we have found that most want to continue competing. Serving as a team captain is a great way to be a leader while still competing. And who better to get the message of sportsmanship out across the movement than the athletes themselves?

SONC encourages each local program to designate a team captain for each of their sports (i.e. an athletics team captain, an aquatics team captain, a team captain for each soccer team, etc.).

The Handling of Incomplete Registration Forms

To facilitate the registration process, please note:

- Where qualifying times or scores are not submitted with registration, SONC reserves the right to put the athlete in the highest ability division.
- Where the appropriate number of events are not designated on registration, SONC will choose the events in which the athlete will participate (for example, aquatics events for state-level competition)

Sport Staff Liaisons

Got a question about a sport? Contact your regional sport contact, or anyone of the sport staff. If they cannot answer your question, they will find out who can!

Joseph Glenn Sport Director-East
Lauren Saulter Sport Director-West
Andrea Stamm Vice President of Sports

919-719-7662 ext. 101
919-719-7662 ext. 113
919-719-7662 ext. 105

jglenn@sonc.net
lsaulter@sonc.net
astamm@sonc.net