

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. Please view the [Training Courses and Requirements for Class A Volunteers, Sport Assistants and Coaches](#) on the [Coach and Sport Resources web page](#) for details on coach levels and links to trainings and the overall coach certification list.

What is new for 2020-2021

Coaching Levels/Titles

Numbered levels to indicate coach certification status have been removed and the three coaching levels of Sport Assistant, Certified and Advanced Certified Coach will be used instead. This does not change the status of the majority of our coaches; it is to streamline requirements and provide a path to coaches who wish to develop their coaching skills, while still being able to recognize the dedicated coaches that complete our basic requirements.

Coaching Special Olympics Athletes (CSOA)

CSOA is still required to be a certified coach. There are, however, some improvements on how a coach may get credit for the course:

- Take the SONC online, facilitator-lead course (approximately 1.5 hrs). Coaches must be present and interact in order to get credit.
- The [Human Kinetics/ASEP course](#) is still available and will count toward certification.
- Coordinators report to sports@sonc.net one of the following to credit a coach (that also holds at least one current sport certification) with having the knowledge equivalent to CSOA:
 - The coach has coached for your program for three or more seasons;
 - The coach is a licensed adapted physical education educator;
 - The coach works in an industry that serves people with IDD (this is addressed on a case-by-case basis).

Continuing education (CE)

Continuing Education is required to be an advanced certified coach. One CE course is required in all three of the following areas every three years: Sport Skills & Tactics, Professional Development and Health and Safety. [Click here for a list of approved courses](#); we hope to add more in the future. Additionally, if a coach must complete CE for their license (for example parks & recreation, educator/teacher), please email sports@sonc.net with the details and the area to which they feel it applies for approval.

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. Any online tests must be completed by the registration deadline of the state-level event:

	Head of Delegation	Individual Sport	Team Sport**
Training Requirements	Protective Behaviors General Orientation	One certified coach for every 10 athletes*	One certified coach per team
Fee/Consequence	Will not be able to attend	\$50 for every 10 athletes that do not have a certified coach per sport	\$50 per team lacking certified coach per sport

*We will round down for fees (i.e. 32 athletes, only 3 Certified Coaches required).

**Team in this respect refers to basketball, soccer, softball, and volleyball and cheerleading teams.

Additionally, a program must have at least one Certified Coach in each sport in which they are participating to bring athletes to a state-level event in that sport. A one-year grace period will be allowed for a local program starting a new sport.