



Overview of the 2026 USA Games

The 2026 Special Olympics USA Games will bring together 3,000 athletes, 1,500 coaches, 10,000 volunteers and 75,000 fans from all 50 states to compete in a variety of sports from June 20-26, 2026. Hosted in Minnesota at the University of Minnesota, as well as other premier locations across the Twin Cities including the National Sports Center in Blaine. Through the power of sports and inclusion, participants at the Special Olympics USA Games will spark a change that transforms lives, communities and the world.

Team Southern California

At the 2026 USA Games, Team Southern California will compete in 7 sports and consist of 80 delegation members: 52 athletes & Unified Partners, 15 coaches, 3 youth leadership experience participants, 9 staff members, and 1 medical support volunteers. Although we will be competing in different sports, we make up one team. Team SOS's composition is detailed below.

SPORT	TEAM MAKEUP	EVENTS	QUALIFYING COMPETITIONS
Athletics*	2 female, 2 male 1 coach	Run: 50m, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m Walk: 100m, 400m Field: Long Jump, Shot Put	2025 Summer Games
Athletics* Interscholastic Unified	4 female (2 athlete, 2 U.P.) 4 male (2 athlete, 2 U.P.) 2 coaches	Run: 100m, 200m, 400m Field: Long Jump, Shot Put	2025 CIF Season
Basketball	10 athletes - male/mixed 3 coaches	Traditional 5v5	2025 Summer Games
Bocce Unified	2 female (1 athlete, 1 UP) 2 male (1 athlete, 1 UP) 1 coach	Singles, Unified Doubles, 4-person Unified Team	2025 Summer Games 2025 Regional Games
Bowling* Unified	2 female (1 athlete, 1 UP) 2 male (1 athlete, 1 UP) 1 coach	Singles, Unified Doubles, 4-person Unified Team	2024 Chapter Games 2024 Regional Games
Golf	Level 2 – 2 female (1 athlete, 1 UP) Level 4 – 2 male (1 athlete, 1 UP) 1 coach	Level 2 - 9-hole alternate shot Level 4 – 9-hole	2024 Chapter Games
Softball	15 athletes – male/mixed 4 coaches	Traditional Slow Pitch	2024 Chapter Games
Swimming*	2 female, 2 male 1 coach	Backstroke: 25m, 50m, 100m Breaststroke: 50m, 100m Butterfly: 50m, 100m Freestyle: 25m, 50m, 100m, 200m, 400m Individual Medley: 100m, 200m	2025 Summer Games
Youth Leadership Experience	High School Unified Pair 1 athlete + 1 Unified Partner 1 chaperone	Youth Leadership Experience	Application

**The 2026 Special Olympics USA Games Performance Standards will be taken into consideration.*

ATHLETE AND UNIFIED PARTNER ELIGIBILITY

SOSC athletes and Unified Partners will be eligible for consideration for the random draw by receiving a gold medal in the identified events at the qualifying competitions per the guidelines in the official Special Olympics Sports Rules, Article I, Section 13 – Criteria for Advancement. If there are no gold medalists who meet the criteria, preference will go to the next highest placement in the sport.

The 2026 Special Olympics USA Games required Performance Standards will also be used to determine eligibility.

ATHLETE AND UNIFIED PARTNER SELECTION

All eligible athletes and Unified Partners will be entered into a random/weighted draw. Confirmation that selected individuals meet Team SOSC's minimum standards for delegation members will be conducted prior to official notification. In the unlikely case an athlete or Unified Partner is selected in multiple sports, they will be asked to choose one sport.

Official notification that athletes and Unified Partners have been selected for Team SOSC will be made by July 1, 2025.

RANDOM/WEIGHTED DRAW

Athletes who have attended previous World Games or National Games are eligible to advance, but there will be a weighted draw that increases the odds for those who have not attended previously. Each athlete in the random draw begins with three entries. If an athlete has competed in one World Games or National Games, they receive two entries. Athletes that have competed in two or more World Games or National Games receive one entry in the random draw.

COACH APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Coaches in both individual and team sports will apply independently of their athletes and may be selected even if none of their Local Program athletes are selected. Coaches are not assured of selection for Team SOSC if one or more of their athletes are selected, however preference will be given to coaches from team's selected in the random draw.

Coaches certified in multiple sports will have the opportunity to identify which sports they would be interested in coaching on the Team SOSC coach application. The coach application can be accessed [here](#).

1. Application process opens March 19, 2025
2. Completed applications due May 5, 2025
3. Selected individuals notified by July 1, 2025

TEAM ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION: HIGH SCHOOL, INTERSCHOLASTIC AND INTERCOLLEGIATE EVENTS

Athletes and Unified Partners will be selected from SOSC's Unified Champion Schools and SO Colleges. Coaches will also be selected in this manner. Performance Standards created for the 2026 USA Games will be used.

2026 SPECIAL OLYMPICS USA GAMES SPORT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Sports Performance Standards have been established by the 2026 USA Games for Athletics, Bowling, Golf and Swimming. These standards establish a minimum time or score standard for participation in these sports to ensure meaningful competition and proper event selection for athletes and Unified Partners at the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games. Please see the information below.

ATHLETICS SPORT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

	Male	Female
Event	Performance Standard	Performance Standard
50m Run	≥ 12.00	≥ 13.00
100m Walk	≤ 46.16	≤ 57.98
400m Walk	≤ 03:59.73	≤ 04:23.81
100m Run	≤ 21.67	≤ 26.56
200m Run	≤ 44.03	≤ 52.75
400m Run	≤ 01:39.05	≤ 02:01.37
800m Run	≤ 04:02.49	≤ 05:10.89
1500m Run	≤ 08:31.48	≤ 10:46.44
Long Jump	≥ 2.72m	≥ 1.95m
Shot Put	≥ 6.62m	≥ 4.61m

BOWLING SPORT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

	Male	Female
Event	Performance Standard	Performance Standard
Singles	≥ 86	≥ 67

GOLF SPORT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Event	Performance Standard
Level 2	9-hole average of ≤ 70
Level 4	9-hole average of ≤ 70

SWIM SPORT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

	Male	Female
Event	Performance Standards	Performance Standards
25 Free	≤ 28.79	≤ 31.79
25 Back	≤ 31.16	≤ 36.32
50 Free	≤ 47.16	≤ 59.54
50 Back	≤ 01:02.22	≤ 01:15.56
50 Fly	≤ 59.03	≤ 01:18.79
50 Breast	≤ 01:10.34	≤ 01:25.22
100 Free	≤ 01:41.45	≤ 02:09.25
100 Back	≤ 02:13.72	≤ 02:39.37
100 Fly	≤ 02:04.57	≤ 02:45.97
100 Breast	≤ 02:14.57	≤ 02:59.36
100 IM	≤ 02:18.87	≤ 02:38.84
200 Free	≤ 3:58.67	≤ 04:59.57
200 IM	≤ 04:37.83	≤ 06:34.17
400 Free	≤ 09:46.79	≤ 12:45.39

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ALL TEAM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DELEGATION MEMBERS

Those selected to represent Team Southern California at the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games must be in good standing with SOSC, demonstrate good sportsmanship, be dedicated to training, possess an understanding of the rules of the sport, and have the ability to function well as part of a team.

To be considered, athletes, Unified Partners and coaches must commit to fulfilling the requirements and possess the qualities outlined below:

- Must be registered with Special Olympics Southern California and be at least 16 years of age (prior to the 2026 USA Games Opening Ceremony).
- Must have competed or coached in their respective sport in the competitions mentioned above, unless otherwise noted.
- Complete, sign and submit all required registration forms, medical forms, and other required documents as needed.
- Have ability to be away from family and work from approximately June 18-27, 2026.
- Possess the skills necessary to function as part of Team Southern California (e.g., cooperation, group living, following directions, basic social skills, good behavior).
- Have ability to handle long days (12-18hrs), walk long distances and stand for long periods of time on a daily basis (excludes applicants in wheelchairs, but still have the stamina for such activities).
- Function independently or with minimal supervision (1:4 coach-to-athlete ratio).
- Must be able to semi-independently manage the activities and skills of daily living (i.e., toileting, showering, personal hygiene).
- Must agree to train in their respective sport and follow SOSC Code of Conducts at all events and trainings up to and including the 2026 USA Games.
- Each delegation member selected must attend all training sessions as outlined by SOSC. This may include weeknight or weekend trainings in central locations around Southern California. Transportation to the trainings is the responsibility of individual delegates.
- All delegation members and athlete family/legal guardian must attend all required Team Southern California meetings and orientations.
- All delegation members will be required to be with Team Southern California for the duration of the USA Games, including but not limited to: travel to/from the USA Games, travel during the games, and in housing and competition venues. **Family visitation will be restricted during travel and at the USA Games; members must be able to function during the Games with minimal contact from family members.**
- Must refrain from the use of alcohol and tobacco products during all 2026 USA Games events, activities, and trainings.
- Participation in a general fitness and health program provided by SOSC, to increase their physical fitness levels that will contribute to their overall success at the 2026 USA Games.
- An athlete, Unified Partner or coach may be removed from Team Southern California, **at any time**, for failure to adhere to the minimum standards or fulfill the responsibilities set forth by SOSC. An athlete or coach may also be removed for issues directly related to the health and safety of themselves or other persons involved with Team Southern California or the 2026 USA Games.

TEAM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TIMELINE

DATES	EVENT
March 19, 2025	Info Packet & Coach Application Available
May 5, 2025	Coach Application Due
July 1, 2025	Selected Athletes and Coaches Notified
December 2025	Team SOSC 2025 Training Camp
Spring 2026	Team SOSC 2026 Training Camp
June 18-27, 2026 (includes travel dates)	2026 Special Olympics USA Games