



Rosemount • Apple Valley • Eagan

New Athlete Welcome Packet



Special Olympics
Minnesota

Table of Contents

Team History & Philosophy	3
Special Olympics Basics	4
What Do We Do Next?	5
Sport Contacts	6
Sports Calendar	7
Leadership Team	8
Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities	9
Athlete Responsibilities	10
Coaching Opportunities	11
Team Finance Basics	12
Fees & Fundraising	13
Team Communications	14
Social Events	15
Medical & Consent Forms	16
Athlete Code of Conduct	17
Parent/Caregiver Code of Conduct	18
Coaches Code of Conduct	19



Welcome to The RAVE!!!

The RAVE is a Special Olympics team that offers children and adults with intellectual disabilities year-round sports training and competition. Our team is founded on the belief that with proper instruction and encouragement our athletes can learn, enjoy, and benefit from participation in individual and team sports.

The RAVE believes that through sports training and competition, our athletes benefit physically, mentally and socially; families are strengthened; and the community at large, both through participation and observation, is united in understanding people with intellectual disabilities in an environment of equality, respect and acceptance.

The RAVE does not limit participation by area or age; therefore, we are one of the largest teams in the state. We are located in the southern suburbs primarily serving the communities of Rosemount, Apple Valley, Eagan, and Lakeville. We currently support over 300 athletes ages 7 and up across ten sports offerings.

Volunteers play a unique and indispensable role with The RAVE in a variety of capacities. Our volunteers provide a supportive, educational, and social environment that makes our athletes competitive while having fun.

We invite all athletes to participate in practices and/or competitions to the best of their ability. We strive to provide an environment that focuses on competition, physical activity, and social development. Our goal is to have fun while staying physically active!

Special Olympics Basics

Sports: Our team currently competes in the following sports: aquatics, basketball, power lifting, athletics (track & field), tennis, bocce, softball, soccer, bowling, and poly hockey. Athletes may participate in as many sports as they desire; however, some sport's practice times and competitions may conflict with other sports.

Season: Most sports seasons are 8-12 weeks.

Practices: Practices are generally held weekly for one hour. Athletes are expected to attend at least 80% of scheduled practices. Please do not sign up for a sport if you cannot make that commitment.

Competitions: Athletes ages 8 and up may participate in competitions if they choose. Most sports have two levels of competitions. The Area competition includes other teams from Area 12 (*Dakota, Ramsey & Scott counties*). The State competition includes teams statewide. Athletes who wish to participate at the State competition must compete in the Area competition for that sport.

Registration: As our team continues to grow, certain sports will have a limited number of athletes that can participate. We will communicate those limits when we send out registration forms. Registration will be on a first come first serve basis provided the participation fee has been paid. Preference will be given to existing RAVE team members.

What Do We Do Next?

So, you decided to play a sport with the RAVE. You may have several questions like, "What do we need to do now?", "How do we sign up for a sport?", or "What should we expect throughout the season?"

What do we need to do now?

To participate in the Special Olympics, each athlete must have a current Application and Physical Examination on file along with a consent form.

- Go to The RAVE website <http://www.theravesp.com/>, go to Form Central, and click on New Medical and Application Form. Please note, this application expires three (3) years from the date of exam.

How do we sign up for a sport?

Pick a sport and look on theravesp.com for registration information. If you join the RAVE mailing list, you should receive Sport Registration forms before each season. The registration form will include a lot of information about the specific sport season such as practice and competition dates, times, and locations, head coach contact information, etc.

- Parent/athlete receives registration form in the mail.
- Fill out the form and return it to The RAVE with payment by the due date.

What should we expect throughout the season?

In 2015, we instituted a first practice mandatory parent meeting. This meeting is to get all new and existing athletes on the same page.

- This meeting ideally should be attended by parents or guardians. Although we welcome PCAs, Group Home caregivers, and transportation services at these meeting, we believe that the parents or guardians are responsible for the athlete's successful participation.
- At the meeting, parents will receive information about the season – practices and competition dates.

During practices, coaches will assess each athlete's performance for placement in proper divisions at the Area competitions. We will track performance times, measurements, and scores. If you are missing practices, check in with your head coaches so we can record qualifying measurements.

Typically, there is an Area (region) competition about half way through the season. This competition is very important to place the athlete in the proper division for the State meet. Generally, if an athlete does not compete at the Area meet, they are not allowed to participate at the State meet.

The week prior to the competitions, individual and team match times and court/lane/field assignments will be made available, if you do not get this information, please contact the head coach directly.

- Prior to area and state tournaments, you may check the website (<http://www.theravesp.com/>) for lane/court/field assignments and times to see if anything changed.
- Arrive at the competitions early and check in with the head coach to ensure that you have the most current information.
- RAVE Coaches will stage all athletes for their specific competition.
- In addition to the athlete competitions, Special Olympics Minnesota offers several activities during the State Games. Look for other opportunities during the day's events such as Opening Ceremony, Healthy Athletes, games, activities, closing Ceremony, etc. Arrive early at area and state meets for opening ceremonies and reading of the Athlete Oath.
- Spectators should arrive early at competitions to get seating and cheer on their athlete. Find your court or area early to secure a spot to watch your athlete.
- When you are at the area and state events, if you have any questions or concerns please contact your head coach. Do not address the volunteers or Special Olympic staff directly; they usually cannot give you more help than a match time. The Rave delegation coaches are your best bet for details. It also lets them know where you are.
- Special Olympics Minnesota recently created a Smartphone app that gives more information than ever before – Meet times, awards, and events. Changes are even updated real time. It is a good thing to grab.

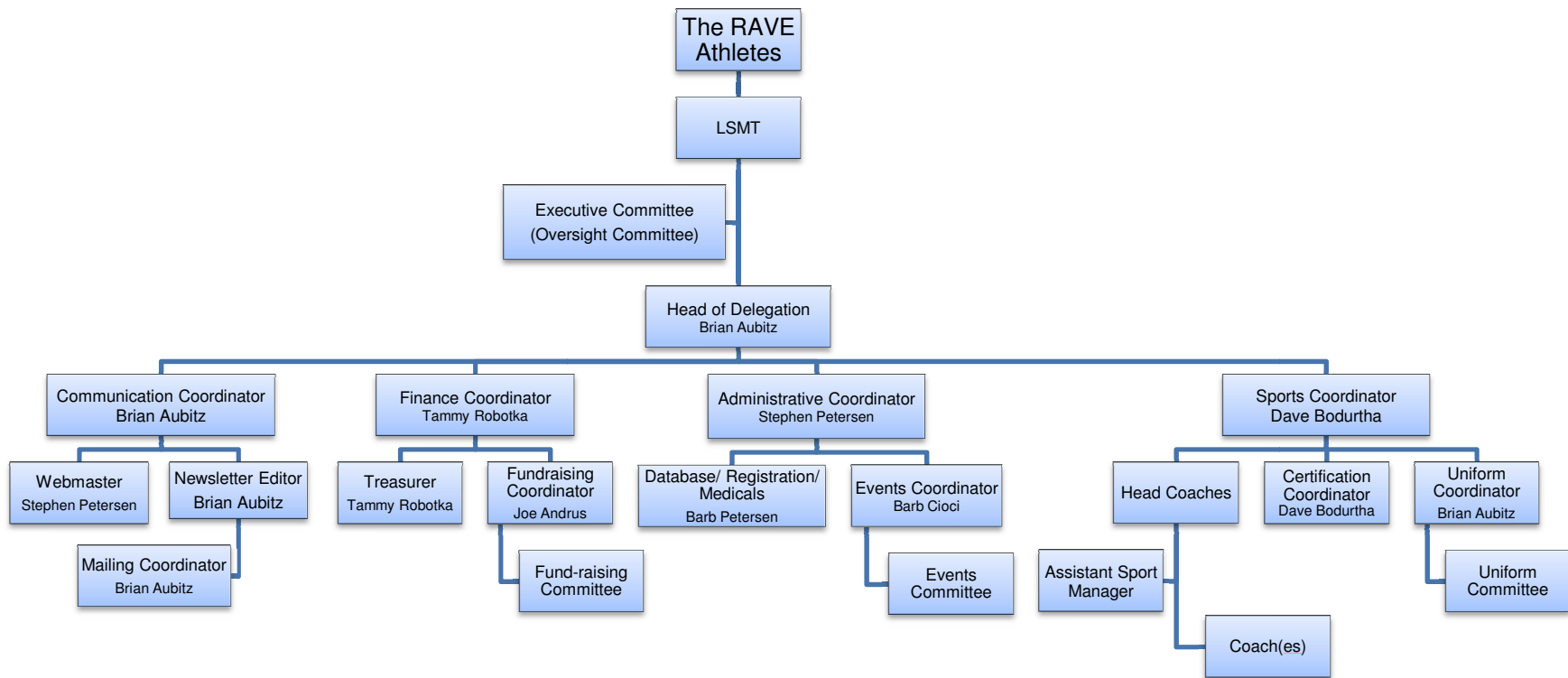
Sport Contacts

Sport	Head Coach	Email	Manager Coach	Email
Spring				
Aquatics	Jerry Dean	jerryscuba@aol.com	Stephen Petersen	stephen@wsiroiwebresults.com
Power Lifting	Chris Anderson	Andersoc1@csp.edu	David Anderson	davids1151@juno.com
Basketball	Jim Thorn	jdthorn@comcast.net	Mary Choronzy	ron_mary_c@yahoo.com
Summer				
Tennis	Mark Springer	springergo@hotmail.com	Juanita Ostendorf	tjostendorf@charter.net
Athletics	Dan Zeller	zellers88@aol.com	Stephen Petersen	stephen@wsiroiwebresults.com
Fall				
Soccer	Jeff Pricco	jpricco@jbglobalco.com	Bill Douglas David Pricco Danielle Pricco	we.douglas@comcast.net dhpricco@gmail.com danielle.hasslinger@gmail.com ;
Bocce	Doug Neeser	douglasneeser@gmail.com	Cheryl Neeser	cneeser@gmail.com
Softball	Jim Thorn	jdthorn@comcast.net	Margaret Mills	mmillsconsulting@charter.net
Winter				
Bowling	Paul Gangl	PGangl@jackhenry.com	Carolyn Buller Ann Aubitz	ckbuller@charter.net annaubitz@comcast.net
Poly Hockey	Don Rife	rifedon@yahoo.com	Barb Cioci	oscarblue64@yahoo.com

Sports Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Aquatics	Blue	Blue	Blue									
Basketball	Blue	Blue	Blue									
Power Lifting	Blue	Blue	Blue									
Track & Field				Green	Green	Green						
Tennis			Green	Green	Green							
Bocce						Red	Red	Red				
Softball				Red	Red	Red	Red					
Soccer					Red	Red	Red	Red				
Bowling									Orange	Orange	Orange	
Poly Hockey	Purple									Purple	Purple	Purple

Leadership Team





Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

Parents/Caregivers:

All Parents/Caregivers are expected to conduct themselves at practices and competitions as outlined in the Parent/Caregivers code of conduct.

Each family is expected to volunteer in support of the team. Each family must commit to one of the following each calendar year:

- Serve as a Level II coach for a sport
- Serve as a Head coach for a sport
- Serve as a Level 1 coach for a sport (actively participate in practices and competitions)
- Serve on the Leadership committee for the team
- Serve as a member for the social, fundraising, coaching, records or welcome committees

Please note: No experience is necessary to serve as a coach.

Each family is expected to participate in at least one fundraiser per year.

Sport participation fees of \$35-\$50/athlete/sport. Unified partners will not be charged a participation fee.

Athlete Responsibilities

Athletes:

All Athletes are expected to conduct themselves at practices and competitions as outlined in the Athlete code of conduct.

As appropriate, Athletes are expected to support fundraising activities and take an active role in supporting team activities.

It is particularly important to let your coach know if you will not be attending a State event. The team is obligated to pay for an athlete once registered even if they do not attend.

Coaching Opportunities

Within The RAVE's program, coaches play a unique and indispensable role. They provide the sports skills and spirit that define a true athlete; they are role models and character builders. Coaches give Special Olympics athletes the most immediate awareness of their own worth, ability, courage and capacity to grow and improve. We use volunteer coaches for all of our sports. Most of our volunteers are parents, siblings, or people willing to spend a small amount of time and get a huge reward.

All of our coaches are volunteers and fall into one of three levels:

- Head Coach: Responsible for organization and execution of practices and competitions for a given sport. Must be Level II certified.
- Level II Coach: Has completed Level II training specific to the sport. Assists at practices and competitions.
- Level I Coach & Unified Partner: Has completed Level I general training. Assists at practices and competitions as needed.

Although not required, we encourage all coaches to attain Level 2 certification. For more information on becoming a coach please contact the Sport Coordinator, any head coach, or go to:

<http://specialolympicsminnesota.org/who-we-are/coaches/>

Special Olympics Minnesota requires a coaching ratio of one coach for approximately every four athletes. Our goal is to support as many athletes as possible for each sport, which requires extensive needs for coach volunteers.

The RAVE competes in softball and soccer outside of Special Olympics Minnesota. To ensure superior coach training and athlete safety, we require all coaches for these sports to meet certification requirements of Special Olympics or Minnesota Youth Soccer Association. We also strive to meet Special Olympic coaching ratios.

Team Finance Basics

Our team relies on fundraising and participation fees to support our operations. Typical costs to support our team in any given year include:

- Competition fees for State competition participation
- Uniforms and equipment
- Facility rentals
- Celebration events to honor our athletes
- Miscellaneous social activities, etc.

The cost for participation in an individual sport season varies by sport, which are covered through fundraising, participation fees, and donations of facilities and equipment. The team does not receive funding from the state office to cover these expenses.

The RAVE is an all-volunteer team; therefore, all funds raised go directly to support our athletes.

It is important to note the RAVE does not receive any funding from the State office or any government agencies. We are completely self-funded, largely aided by our generous donors.

Fees & Fundraising

Our team relies on fundraising, participation fees, and donations to support our operations. Here's how you can help:

Our primary fundraising events include:

- Polar Plunge
- Valley Tap House Golf Tournament
- Mel-O Match
- Culvers
- Davanni's

We encourage every family to participate in any of our fundraising events to help minimize the financial burden on all athletes.

Other opportunities to support the team include:

- Many employers will support a charitable organization in the form of donations or employee support if their employee volunteers a required number of hours per year.
- Many companies will provide a corporate match to employee charitable donations.
- Donate the proceeds from in-home parties and fundraisers.

ATHLETE PARTICIPATION FEE:

A participation fee of \$35-\$50/athlete/season will be assessed. Scholarships are available as needed.



Team Communications

The RAVE's primary means of communication is via e-mail. This account is: info@theravesp.com

This account is used to manage the master team roster and general RAVE communications. Please do not send personal e-mails to this address. If you need to distribute a message to the team, please contact Brian Aubitz.

The RAVE will also communicate important news and information on our web page, face book, and twitter accounts. The Leadership team and Coaches will have access to these accounts.

Head Coaches are responsible for all communications for their sport activities including registration, practices, Area and State meet details. Please contact your Head Coach with any sport-specific questions or comments. Athletes, parents, and caregivers are responsible for informing the Head Coach when they will not be attending a practice or meet.

If an athlete, parent, or caregiver has a concern, complaint, or recommendation please feel free to contact any member of the leadership team directly.

For the latest news and information, please follow The RAVE on any of the following:

The RAVE Website: theravesp.com/

The RAVE Face Book: facebook.com/pages/The-Rave/272033142966166

The RAVE Twitter: twitter.com/theravesp

Special Olympics Minnesota website: specialolympicsminnesota.org/

Social Events

It is our goal to provide a variety of Social Events each year for athletes, families, and coaches to enjoy.

- We currently schedule a team celebration at the end of each sporting season for participating athletes and coaches to recognize and celebrate their achievements.
- Annually, we schedule an all-sport gathering to celebrate the year-round achievements of all of our athletes and recognize the efforts of our dedicated volunteers.

We will continue to look for additional opportunities to provide social get-togethers for The RAVE . The Events committee is happy to take suggestions and volunteers to help organize events.

Medical & Consent Forms

All athletes are required to have medical and consent forms completed and on file with the SOMN before an athlete's first practice. To complete the required paperwork follow these steps:

1. New athletes may obtain forms from the State website:
specialolympicsminnesota.org/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/become-an-athlete/
Athlete medical forms must be updated every 3 years.
2. Completed forms must be submitted to the State office and can either be faxed or scanned and e-mailed to
athletpaperwork@somn.org or 612-333-8782
3. In addition, completed forms must be sent to The RAVE Records Chair at info@theravesp.com or sent by US mail to:

Barb Petersen
16202 Grinnell Avenue
Lakeville, MN 55044

Once all paperwork has been completed, the athlete will be added to the team roster. Please make sure to let us know when e-mails or phone numbers change. Any changes can be sent to:

info@theravesp.com

Please note: Athletes must sign a new consent form upon turning the age of 18.

We cannot stress enough that athletes are not allowed to practice or compete until all paperwork is current and on file with the state – NO EXCEPTIONS!

Athlete Code of Conduct

The RAVE is committed to the highest ideals of sports and expects the highest standard of athlete behavior to ensure the safety and well-being of all athletes involved in training and competition. All athletes and Unified Partners are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and standards of behavior as established by Special Olympics Minnesota.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to my coaches, team, my Special Olympics, and me.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or say mean things about other persons.
- I will not fight (either with a loud voice or hitting) with other athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, or staff.
- I will listen to directions given by my coach and Special Olympics staff.
- I will let my coach know whenever I leave my team.

TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly, participating fully in each session to the best of my ability.
- I will let my coach know when I will not be at practice.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will let the “coaches coach” and will not attempt to coach my fellow teammates unless asked to do so by the Head Coach.
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning, and competitions.
- I will not “hold back” in preliminaries just to get into an easier final heat.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.
- I will follow the rules that are in place for my delegation.
- I will not bring any harmful weapons to any Special Olympics activity.

TEAM EXPECTATIONS

- I will have my medicals and consent forms filled out and submitted to the state office and the team prior to the **FIRST** day of practice or I will not be able to participate.
- I must call and let the sports season head coach know if I am not going to be at practice. This contact information will be given the first day of practice to the family/athlete of each sports season.
- I must be at practice for assessments or I will not be able to participate in the competitions.
- I will check in with my coaches at competitions.
- I will be accompanied by my parent/PCA/caregiver **AT ALL TIMES** at competitions and practices.
- Once I have checked in at a competition, I may not leave the competition venue without getting permission/checking out with the Head Coach.

I understand that it is a privilege to participate in Special Olympics and not a right. I also understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, my delegation, U.S. Program or Games Organizing Committee may not allow me to participate.

Parent/Caregiver Code of Conduct

The RAVE is committed to the highest ideals of sports and expects all parents and spectators to honor Sports and Special Olympics. All parents/caregivers and spectators are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and standards of behavior as established by Special Olympics Minnesota. All Special Olympics parents/caregivers and spectators agree to observe the following code:

- Remember athletes are participating for their enjoyment. Encourage participation, but do not force it.
- I will let the “coaches coach” during practices and competitions, and provide constructive feedback/ideas after practice and/or competitions.
- Applaud good performances and efforts from all individuals and teams. Congratulate all participants on their performance, regardless of the game’s outcome.
- Focus on the athletes’ effort and performance, rather than whether they win or lose.
- Encourage athletes to play according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence.
- Never ridicule or yell at athletes, coaches or other spectators or parents for making a mistake or losing the competition.
- Remember that athletes learn best by example. Appreciate good performance and skillful plays by all participants.
- Respect the decisions of officials and teach athletes to do the same.
- Show appreciation for volunteer coaches, officials, teacher, and administrators. (Remember without them there would be no participation)
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, whether it is by spectators, coaches, officials, or players.
- Show respect for your team’s opponents. Without them, there would be no game.
- Encourage athletes and coaches to follow the rules and the officials’ decisions.
- Swearing and/or inappropriate language will not be tolerated at Special Olympics Minnesota Events or practices.
- Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background, or religion.
- Inappropriate behaviors during trainings or competitions will not be tolerated and the parent or spectator may be asked to leave the event or training.

TEAM EXPECTATIONS

- I will have medicals and consent forms filled out and submitted to the state office and to the team prior to the FIRST practice or my athlete will not be able to participate.
- My athlete must participate at all practices to be able to compete at competitions, not just show up to practice. Athletes that do not participate regularly in practices will not be able to participate in competitions. No exceptions.
- I must call and let the sports season head coach know if we are not going to be at practice. This contact information will be provided to the family/athlete at the beginning of each sports season.
- My athlete must be at practice for all assessments or will not be able to participate in the competitions.
- I will assure my athlete checks in with the coach at competitions.
- Myself, or another adult acting on my behalf, will accompany my athlete AT ALL TIMES at competitions and practices.
- Once my athlete has checked in at a competition, I will not leave the immediate area where my athlete is located without getting permission/checking with the head coach.
- If we are not able to compete at competitions because of the above expectations, we may still be able to practice if the state office and team have updated medical and consent.

Coaches Code of Conduct

Special Olympics is committed to the highest ideals of sports and expects all coaches to honor Sports and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics coaches agree to observe the following code:

Respect for Others and the Organization

- I will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of athletes, coaches, other volunteers, spectators, and staff in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or ability.
- I will not promote religious or political beliefs or preferences while functioning in the capacity of a volunteer.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.
- I will support and promote actions, opinions and philosophies that are consistent with Special Olympics Minnesota's mission and values.
- I will not willfully or maliciously damage the property or reputation of Special Olympics Minnesota

Ensure a Positive Experience

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure that each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate, and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of their ability at all preliminaries and final heats in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation, and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity, and professionalism to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, media, etc.).
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not smoke in restricted areas, take illegal drugs, or misuse prescription drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competitions or activities, or while in transit to training sessions, competitions or activities.
- I will have knowledge of and abide by the policies of Special Olympics Minnesota.
- I have specifically read and will abide by the Special Olympics Minnesota Alcohol Policy.
- Depending on my position within each sport, I will alert my Head Coach, Head of Delegation, or Special Olympics Minnesota staff to report actions by athletes or other volunteers contrary to the Codes of Conduct.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances on others, verbal, physical, and emotional abuse.
- I will not act in a way that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff or spectators.
- I will alert Special Olympics Minnesota and the appropriate authorities to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics Sports Rules for my sport(s).

Quality Service to the Athletes

- I will seek continual improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the sports rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a plan for a regular training program.
- I will follow the Special Olympics Sports Rules for my sport(s).

Health and Safety of the Athletes

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's medical form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on the form.
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- I will maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.