

Special Olympics Maryland Area Memo

02/26/2025

**Special
Olympics
Maryland**



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Welcome

Congratulations to our Athletes, Unified Teammates, and Coaches on an exciting Winter Games. The cold and snowy weather in Garrett County last week helped conditions greatly, and we appreciate the work of the many staff members at WISP for making the games possible! We hope you and your athletes had a positive experience at this year’s Winter Games!

If there are any members of your area’s leadership who are not currently receiving the Area Memo, [please fill out this form](#)

Shout out a volunteer

This memo’s shout outs go to...

Donna and Stewart Holt for their continued enthusiastic support of the Deep Creek Dunk, especially coordinating so many SOMD-Garrett County Athletes to attend and dunk!

Joyce Powell and the Baltimore County Management Team for an excellent qualifier at Garrison Forest School!

Our Winter Games Management Team, Winter Games HODs, and Alpine Skiing and Snowshoeing coaches for a fantastic Winter Games! Thank you for providing our athletes an excellent season on snow.

Please use the link below to submit shout your outs!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LV88QG9>

(NEW) Dunk 2025

Our Cold Water Series wrapped up with successful Deep Creek Dunk Events, raising \$243,071.21! Thank you to all of the Area Programs who supported through

SO Learn “Help Desk” Email

Several months ago SO Learn, a learning site for Special Olympics volunteers managed by SOI, made a significant transition to a new LMS (learning management system). Generally things have gone well but we've recently seen a number of inquiries regarding getting passwords (there's a link to request a password reset but that seems to occasionally not work as expected). Unfortunately there is currently no place to get help on the login page (I've asked them to consider changing that).

To help, the following has been added to the main Coach Resource Page (CRP) and you can direct folks there for assistance:

NOTE: The SO LEARN site (used for protective behaviors and concussion certifications) is operated by SOI. If you experience any technical issues with the site (including access your password) please email elarning@specialolympics.org for assistance.

Pickleball Update

Update: SOMD will host an In-person coaches training on Sunday, March 9th, from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM at Dill Dinkers in Columbia, MD. If you are a coach or plan to be involved, please register using the following link no later than Wednesday, March 5th:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/pickleball2025>

Thank you to Dill Dinkers and most especially to Pickleball Ad Hoc Committee member Bob Sans for making this happen.

Update #1:

Jake Novick (jnovick@somd.org) has been designated as the Sport Director for Pickleball. Mike Czarnowsky will continue in a lead role for the next few months as this new sport transitions to Jake's leadership.

Original post:

We are excited with the progress that has been made with the transition of Pickleball to a state-level sports for SOMD. A special thank you to the members of Ad Hoc Pickleball Advisory group who have been instrumental in preparations (Sue Anzalone, Mike Malinoski, Bobbie Ridley and Bob Sans).

Based on the input from this advisory group, and using the input from the Area Survey conducted in Fall 2024, some key decisions that we can share at this time:

- We will have a briefing session for interested coaches and Area leaders on Monday, February 17 at 6:00-7:30pm on Zoom (<https://somd.zoom.us/j/89057958741?pwd=hBEK2OvwL44kHErlofdiqLHIURNa24.1>)
- Pickleball will be considered a "spring season" sport
- Pickleball competitions will follow the Special Olympics rules for Pickleball
 - Events Offered
 - Individual Skills
 - Singles
 - Doubles
 - Unified Doubles
 - Levels
 - Individual Skills
 - Level 1 (Beginner)
 - Level 2 (Advanced Beginner)
 - Level 3 (Intermediate)
 - Level 4 (Advanced)
 - SONA Pickleball Resource Page: [Pickleball - SONA Sports Resource Page - Smartsheet.com](#)

- Pickleball competitions should be conducted on actual pickleball courts (not short-term-converted tennis courts or other spaces) and should be conducted indoors, whenever possible.
- In 2025 SOMD will host a state Pickleball Championship as a single-sport, standalone event in a late-June/early-July timeframe for a variety of reasons including but not limited to:
 - Larger pool of participants possible; this allows for better divisioning in this initial year than if we lost 30% or so who would be competing in another sport at Summer Games
 - SOMD's ability to dedicate GMT and staff support to a first-time event (which would not be able to be held on the campus of TU)
 - Greater flexibility on dates to secure an appropriate facility on six-months notice
- After 2025's championship we will assess whether to integrate pickleball into Summer Games or keep it as a standalone event.
- We are working on scheduling coaches training sessions this spring

More updates will be provided as the advisory group continues its work. We look to have a Sport Director assigned to Pickleball within the next couple weeks. In the interim, Mike Czarnowsky (mczarnowsky@somd.org) will be serving in that capacity.

(UPDATED) CSOA Virtual Session

Update (2/21/2025): The March 4 Virtual CSOA Course has filled to capacity. The second course on March 24 now has 8 registrants and has 12 remaining available seats.

Update: Given the significant quick response to the March 4 Virtual CSOA session (only 4 remaining spots of the initial 20 available), we have added a **second Virtual CSOA Session on Monday, March 24, 2025**, from 6:30-7:00pm (also with a limit of 20). The link to register is the same as in the original post below.

Original post:

SOMD is pleased to host a "live" virtual session of Coaching Special Olympics Athletes (CSOA), the course which ALL coaches are required to complete at least once in order to earn/maintain Special Olympics Coach Sport Certification. This interactive session will be held on Tuesday, March 4 from 6:30 – 9:00 pm via Zoom and will be limited to 20 registrants.

Coaches may register for this course using the link below (*must register no later than Friday, February 28*)
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CSOA_2025_V

Coaches who are unable to attend either of these session may always complete the individual online version of the CSOA course – licenses can be obtained by emailing coaches@somd.org. Additional details are available on the SOMD Coach Resource Page's Coach Education and Development Section (www.somd.org/coach-resources/).

Note: Due to limited numbers of available licenses, this individual online option is currently limited to coaches/volunteers who have not already completed CSOA.

Athlete Registration Process Updates

SOMD is progressing on launching changes in the Athlete Registration process discussed with Area leaders at the in-person November Area Leader Meeting. Thank you to the "Ad Hoc Advisory Group" who has, and will continue to, provide valuable insight (Shelly Bogasky, Jeff Hagen, Nancy Simpson, Laquitta Washington). They are providing input and recommendations for the key aspects of the project (indicated by the double asterisks below).

- Determine Process and Procedures**
- Determine Adjustments to Template Forms provided by SONA**
- Tech Updates (GMS adjustments & database changes)

- Communications/Training**
 - Area/GMS Leaders
 - Coaches/Coordinators
 - Athletes, Families, Stakeholders
 - Other
- Launch and Tracking
- Review and adjust**

Additional updates will be provided as available. And, as previously noted: **Nothing has changed** until it has changed (*i.e., full medicals are still required until the new athlete registration process is formally launched*)

Original post:

Thank you to everyone who was able to join us at the live Area Leader meeting at SOMD HQ on November 16. Two of the several lively topics of discussion were the upcoming change in athlete registration and SOMD’s shift to Salesforce as its “single source of truth” database (and the transition of athlete records and registration to this new database).

While there is much to still determine on both projects, we did want to try to clarify the current estimated, overlapping time frames (as roughly laid out by Mike during the AD meeting). The table below captures what was discussed at the meeting.

Please keep in mind the following two constant parameters:

- Any timeframes are estimates and subject to change.
- **Nothing has changed** until it has changed (*i.e., full medicals are still required until the new athlete registration process is formally launched*)

Also, as noted during the meeting, as we develop greater clarity on this overall process we will certainly have multiple sharing opportunities with athletes, coaches, families, agencies, etc.

	<i>Current Process</i>	<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 3</i>
Estimated Time Frame	NA	2025 – Q1 / Q2	2025 – Q3 / Q4	TBD (late 2025 or early 2026?)
Athlete Registration	Medical form signed by medical professional and CDW, valid for 3 years	Athlete registration form incl CDW (<i>no medical signature required</i>); annual update	Athlete registration form incl CDW (<i>no medical signature required</i>); annual update	Athlete registration form incl CDW (<i>no medical signature required</i>); annual update
Form submission process	Collected by Area and submitted via k:\ drive	Collected by Area and submitted via k:\ drive	Most submitted electronically by athlete/family/agency; remaining submitted by Area (<i>process TBD</i>)	Most submitted electronically by athlete/family/agency; remaining submitted by Area (<i>process TBD</i>)
Training Registration	Area enters training registrants into proper games in GMS	Area enters training registrants into proper games in GMS	Area enters training registrants into proper games in GMS	Athlete training registration handled online within Salesforce
Compétition Registration (évents/scores/etc.)	Area enters athletes into competitive events with needed scores in GMS	Area enters athletes into competitive events with needed scores in GMS	Area enters athletes into competitive events with needed scores in GMS	Some competition registrations handled with GMS (mostly individual events); some registrations (mostly teams/bracketed events) handled through new means (SalesForce or other)

Minute Clinic Voucher Renew

Special Olympics North America has renewed their partnership with Minute Clinic. Through this partnership, Special Olympics Athletes are eligible to receive a discounted sports physical at Minute Clinic locations. Athletes must present the discount voucher at the time of their physical. **An updated voucher is attached to this email.**

Be Kind, Report Your In-Kind!

Reporting your program's in-kind donations throughout the year ensures that we accurately report the many donations of supplies, equipment, and facilities we generously receive throughout the year...and it saves you the headache of trying to remember a full year of donations!

In order to help us all stay organized, Kim put together the In-Kind reporting form linked below. This will stay open throughout the year (and will stay in the area memo) so that Area Leaders can easily report in-kind donations after each sport season or program. This will also be linked on the Area Leader Resource Page on SOMD.org (<https://www.somd.org/area-programs/area-leader-resources/>) (Reminder, this page is password protected)

In-Kind Reporting Link: <https://forms.monday.com/forms/166de9fabcf9c82e5f20fca7b94fa17d?r=use1>

Area Program Sport & Activity Information Form

To more effectively capture the many programs and activities taking place in the community, we have put together a Training Program Information Form.

This form will help our state office stay more organized with up-to-date information on what programs are happening, where they're happening, and when they are happening.

Please submit 1 form for each sport/activity from your program using the link below:

<https://wkf.ms/3Kqg0Zp>

To avoid duplicate submissions, Coaches, Sport Volunteers, and Sport Coordinators, please work with your Area Leadership on submitting this form as they may have done so already.

We ask that this is submitted by the registration deadline during each sport season.

If you have any questions, please contact Jeff Abel (jabel@somd.org).

Area Program Fundraiser Info Form

As we discussed in our Area Director meeting and on Monday's call, we'd like to get a better idea of the many fundraisers taking place around the state in support of Special Olympics Maryland. This will also help us advertise your events while also consolidating state office requests for credit card machines, Classy Pages, and more.

[Moving forward, please fill out this form when you are planning a fundraiser.](#)

Donation Information Corner

1. **Area Donation Tracking Link:** please use this link to provide information to SOMD about any anticipated gifts that may come directly to the SOMD office or bank account:
[Area Donation Tracking Report](#)
2. **Private Donation Link for Honor/Memorial Donations and specific gifts from donors:** If you have an individual donor or sponsor that has reached out to you and wants to make a donation to support your program directly, or if you would like to include a link for memorial donations, you can provide this PRIVATE donation link, but please remember, **this link cannot be included on your local area website or sent out as an email blast.** Please encourage donors to fill out the "Direct My Gift to" dropdown in the form. [Private Giving Link Request](#)

3. **Stock Giving Option:** please provide the information below to anyone who would like to make a gift of stock to your local area program. You can also notify SOMD that a gift is coming to support your program by adding this information to the [Area Donation Tracking Report](#).
To make a gift of stock, please share this information with your financial advisor:

Morgan Stanley LLC
DTC #0015
For the benefit of Special Olympics Maryland/633-117478
c/o: Morgan Stanley
1201 Wills Street, Suite 700
Baltimore, MD 21231

4. **Matching Gifts:** Many companies generously offer to match their employees' charitable contributions. Some even provide matching funds to support employee volunteer hours. Most of these programs match contributions dollar for dollar, and some will even double or triple the amount of your gift!

[Click Here](#) to enter your employer's name to see if they participate in the matching gift program, and if they do, get a link to the matching donation page.

If you are aware of any matching gifts that may be coming in for your local area program, please notify SOMD that a gift is coming to support your program by adding this information to the [Area Donation Tracking Report](#)

(UPDATED) Finance Corner

TRUIST CREDIT CARDS - All SOMD credit card holders should have received an email from Truist on Monday Jan 6th. It is a legitimate email.

We are being directed to set up enhanced security on all of our credit cards. Please log into the credit card portal on or shortly after January 13th and set up the two-factor authentication, even if you don't currently have any charges on your account.

CLOSING THE 2024 FISCAL YEAR – please submit, review, approve, complete all transactions for the 2024 fiscal year just as soon as possible. Some of you may be waiting on invoices for late December expenses. Please jump on these when you receive them so that the finance team can do the work needed for the audit.

(UPDATED) Pre-Season and Pre-Competition Coach Webinars

The dates and time for Pre-Season and Pre-Competition webinars have been set for the upcoming seasons. Please share this info with your coaches and sports volunteers.

Pre-Season Coaches Webinars (slides from recorded sessions are available on the respective CRP)

<i>Sport</i>	<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Registration / Recording Link</i>
Alpine Skiing	Mon, 12/2	Recording: https://youtu.be/87TJ6cayqs4
Snowshoeing	Mon 11/18	Recording: https://youtu.be/dyXCjyFuyS4
Basketball	Thu 12/05	Recording: https://youtu.be/hztbvpqSZ_I
Athletics (T&F)	Thu, 3/20 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/jrEh7gwwTFiXukh4dFXoSQ
Bocce	Thu, 3/13 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/XoZnhPifTX6ucYYgu2ROgg
Cheerleading	Wed, 3/12 7:00-8:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/2PgAYrHaRli8DukeiOILBQ
Softball	Wed, 3/12 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/_ZU365LaRkOFZJccN32-ZQ
Swimming	Wed, 3/19 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/j/89766001373?pwd=zWkGcDgVaguDbJy9YBdP13CFMUWfCl.1
Pickleball	Mon, 2/17	Recording: https://youtu.be/IIYFhjP1tqsf

Kayaking	Thu, 5/22 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/j/87055459716?pwd=UTuAc5BmEQXfst51p9fUCZunGn8GkX.1

Pre-Competition Coaches Webinars (slides from recorded sessions are available on the respective CRP)

Sport	Date/Time	Registration / Recording Link
Alpine Skiing	Wed, 2/19 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpcOmoqzIoEtBGFXIa3MGL34IbEGE5on9e
Snowshoeing	Thu, 2/13 6:00-7:30p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMkcuuopjlrHNXg6ZwWmfyE1Kf0rYgEjb0v
Basketball <i>Day 1 - 5v5 Trad/Unif</i>	Tue, 3/18 6:00-7:30p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAqf-CrrTotHNZcxSLLTDQC05j8PMQDRxs9
Basketball <i>Day 2 - 3v3 Trad/PDU, 5v5 PDU, Skills</i>	Tue, 3/18 7:30-9:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUadu6qrDwvHNzS3d80Y7GPNGb-TD8Lqu4j
Athletics (T&F)	Thu, 6/12 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/ly_Ah34BQM28X7vS4LBtzg
Bocce	Thu, 6/12 7:30-8:30p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/m1hGpeNmTSyhb68TYF3xsw
Cheerleading	Wed, 6/11 7:00-8:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/HXqMZq6WTRuQHPiCAA-H9A
Softball	Wed, 6/11 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/op6Q9BIERcCrWdkBgmP9mg
Swimming	Tue, 6/10 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/j/86072023406?pwd=xA9WpUK37kiD7H1IY6cblspzfMPXsZ.1
Pickleball	TBD	TBD
Kayaking – Time Trials	Tue, 8/5 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/j/84913777351?pwd=2hJWI1mP19a2bGUiKvUAI2pIpUeNx8.1
Kayaking – Finals	Tue, 8/12 6:00-7:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/j/83587404110?pwd=vteCVZIWLsn1OqNReUqKGgcoLEGLmE.1

Sports Department Contacts – Assigned Sports

Your Area Director and Area Leadership should always be your first point of contact. However, should you have questions regarding a specific sport, coach education, or competition, please work with the corresponding Sport Director.

• **Melissa Anger, Senior Sports Director**

- manger@somid.org, 410.979.5112

Basketball

Flag Football

Locally Popular Sports: Volleyball

Cheerleading

Softball

• **Julie Klein, Sports Director**

- jklein@somid.org, 443.900.3155

Bowling

Kayaking

Locally Popular Sports: Duckpin, Equestrian,

Cycling

Swimming

Sailing

- **Mani Madala, Sports Director**
 - mmadala@somd.org,
Athletics (*Track & Field / Long Distance Running*)
Golf Snowshoeing *Locally Popular Sports: DanceSport,
Powerlifting Floor Hockey*

- **Jake Novick, Sports Director**
 - jnovick@somd.org, 774.276.5861
Alpine Skiing Soccer *Locally Popular Sports: Duckpin Bowling,
Bocce Tennis Short Track Speed Skating*
Pickleball

If you have questions regarding multi-sport events, or USA/World Games, please contact:

- **Steve Bennett, Senior Director, Competitions**
 - sbennett@somd.org, 304.991.1421
Summer Games Fall Sports Festival USA Games
Winter Games World Games

If you have questions regarding High School Unified® Sports (IUS) training and competition, please contact:

- **Zach Cintron, Senior Director, High School Unified® Sports**
 - zcintron@somd.org, 973.862.0414
IUS Athletics (T&F) IUS Indoor Bocce IUS Tennis
IUS Outdoor Bocce IUS Strength & Conditioning IUS Flag Football

- **Tyler Harrell, Manager, High School Unified® Sports**
 - tharrell@somd.org, 410.251.0331
IUS High School program logistics and coordination with Districts and Local School Systems

If you have questions regarding training/competition registration certifications or the processing of forms, please contact:

- **Dottie Rush, Registration Manager**
 - drush@somd.org, 410.242.1515 x111

Overall Sports Leadership (any sports/competition questions that aren't related to a specific sport)

- **Mike Czarnowsky, Vice President, Sports**
 - mczarnowsky@somd.org, 410.241.6280

Questions?

If You Have Any Questions on Any Other Non-Sports-Related Issues, please contact a member of the Local Programs Team

- **Jeff Abel, Vice President, Local Programs**
 - jabel@somd.org, 410-242-1515 ex. 121
 - Any general question

- **Melissa Kelly, Senior Director, Unified® Champion schools**
 - mkelly@somd.org, 410-979-5839
 - Unified® Champion Schools, Youth Leadership, and School Engagement, Middle School Sports

- **Tasha Harris, Director, Unified Champion Schools College Programs**
 - THarris@somd.org, 410-242-1515 ex. 184
 - College Programs & Partnerships, Unified Intramurals

- **Allie Boyd, Manager, Unified Champion Schools**
 - aboyd@somd.org, 223-848-1210
 - Unified Champion Schools Youth Leadership & Whole School Engagement
- **Julie Martin, Unified Champion Schools Consultant**
 - jmartin@somd.org
 - Unified Champion Schools Grant
- **Mackenzie Irvin, Senior Director, Inclusive Health & Fitness**
 - mirvin@somd.org, 857-939-4867
 - Young Athletes Program, Unified Physical Education, Inclusive Health Pilot Programs
- **Kayla Shields, Director, Inclusive Health and Fitness**
 - kshields@somd.org, 410-404-4115
 - Healthy Athletes, Fitness Programs, Unified® Physical Education, Health Messengers
- **VACANT, Manager, Young Athletes Program**
 - Please connect with Mackenzie Irvin
- **Sue Snyder, Unified® Physical Education Consultant**
 - ssnyder@somd.org
 - Unified® Physical Education
- **Sam Boyd, Volunteer Director**
 - sboyd@somd.org, 443-766-9245
 - Volunteer Recruitment, Retention, Training
- **Liz Doda, AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinator**
 - LDoda@somd.org
 - Volunteer Recruitment and Event Engagement
- **Mike Myers, Sr. Director, Area Programs**
 - mmyers@somd.org, 443-799-5335
 - All Area Programs- Primary POC for, SM, CH, CL
- **Bob Signor, Region Director- Central**
 - rsignor@somd.org
 - Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Howard, Montgomery
- **Horace Dickerson, Region Director- Metro Programs**
 - hdickerson@somd.org
 - Baltimore City, Prince George's County
- **Kyler Mellott, Region Director- East**
 - kmellott@somd.org, 814-470-9474
 - Harford, Cecil, Kent, Upper Shore, Lower Shore
- **Heather Matthews, Region Coordinator- East**
 - HMatthews@somd.org
 - Agency Programming- Upper Shore & Lower Shore
- **VACANT, Region Director- West**
 - Please Contact Mike Myers