



SOSC Coach Education System Overview

The key to improving athlete performance and well-being is the quality of sport training and experiences provided by Head Coaches, Coaches, and Team Volunteers. The **SOSC Coach Education System** includes minimum requirements for each level of sports volunteerism or coaching and provides a path of continuing education for those coaches who desire to gain additional knowledge and skills.

Beginning in 2019, all SOSC sport volunteers will be certified in one of the following three categories. New sport volunteers will be on-boarded as Level 1 – Team Volunteers and will only be moved into coaching roles upon completion of the certification requirements for subsequent levels.

Types of SOSC Volunteer Sport Roles

- **Level 1 – Team Volunteer** – Entry level training of Special Olympics for team manager, equipment manager, training site volunteer, chaperone. This is a non-coaching role and cannot provide instruction to athletes.
- **Level 2 – Certified Coach (Coach)** – Training in the core coaching components and sports-specific essentials in traditional Special Olympics and Unified Sports.
- **Level 3 – Certified Coach (Head Coach)** – Advanced training for coaching traditional Special Olympics and Unified Sports.

While some sport volunteers may choose to remain a Team Volunteer, others may strive to increase their level of certification. Those who wish to advance to the next coaching level must follow the steps below:

Level 1 – Team Volunteer

- Requirements to be an entry level sport volunteer for SOSC
 - Class A Volunteer Application
 - Online Background Check (18+)
 - Online required training:
 - SOSC General Orientation
 - Protective Behaviors Training
 - Concussion Course
 - Coaching Special Olympics Athletes (CSOA) or SOSC’s Training Special Olympics Athletes (TSOA) certification

Level 2 – Certified Coach or Certified Unified Sports Coach or Certified Team Wellness Coach

- Requirements for Traditional/Community Programs
 - All Level 1 requirements
 - Sports Specific Skills certification: in-person training conducted by a certified clinician for first time coaches. Coaches who are re-certifying can take SOSC’s online course

- Requirements for Unified Sports Programs
 - All Level 1 requirements
 - Coaching Unified Sports certification: online course via National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) or in-person training conducted by a certified clinician
 - Sports Specific Skills certification: in-person training conducted by a certified clinician for first time coaches. Coaches who are re-certifying can take SOSC's online course
- Requirements for Team Wellness Programs
 - All Level 1 requirements
 - Team Wellness certification: in-person training conducted by a certified clinician
- **Important Notes**
 - CSOA/TSOA and/or Coaching Unified Sports certification is required before being eligible to take the Sports Specific Skills certification course.
 - In addition, CSOA/TSOA or Coaching Unified Sports must be taken prior to placement with a team, while the Sport Specific Skills certification course must be taken prior to the first full season of coaching.
 - SOSC has identified continuing education opportunities for Level 1 Certified Coaches so that required recertification can be achieved every three (3) years. There is a menu of options available to achieve recertification. See the list of SOSC approved courses below.
 - This level of certification is required of all Head Coaches and Coaches applying to coach at USA Games.

Level 3 – Certified Head Coach

- Requirements for Traditional/Community, Unified Sports, and/or Team Wellness Programs
 - All Level 2 requirements
 - Principles of Coaching course: in-person training conducted by a certified clinician or online via West Virginia University Continuing Education.
- **Important Notes**
 - This level of certification is required of all Head Coaches and Coaches applying to coach at World Games.
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Continuing Education

In order to maintain certification, a coach must update his/her certifications every 3 years. Below is the current list of courses approved for recertification. This list will be updated periodically and will be available online at <http://www.sosc.org/coachescorner>:

- First-Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Course
- Sport-Specific Performance Training and Nutrition
- Athlete Behavior Characteristics and Strategies to Improve Learning
- Officials Training; Rules Updates
- National Governing Body courses
- A Coach's Playbook: Introduction to Autism and Instructional Strategies for Coaching

- NFHS - Fundamentals of Coaching
- Positive Coaching Alliance: Double Goal Coach: Culture, Practice and Games
- Positive Coaching Alliance: Double Goal Coach: Coaching for Winning and Life Lessons
- NFHS - Sports Nutrition

Coaches may identify other Special Olympics or third party courses that may be deemed appropriate for recertification. These courses must be pre-approved by the CES team prior to completion.