

Special Olympics Maryland Area Memo

01/10/2025

**Special
Olympics
Maryland**



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Welcome

Happy New Year! We hope everyone enjoyed a safe and happy holiday season and stayed warm with the recent snowfall...and it looks like there's a little more to come! All this snow gets us in the mood for Plunge and Dunk season! So don't forget to sign up you and/or your team at PlungeMD.com or DunkMD.com!

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...

Jeff Hagen, Shelly Bogasky, Laquitta Washington and Nancy Simpson for their valuable feedback related to updates to the Athlete Registration Process! We appreciate you taking the time to serve on the advisory group and value your input!

Please use the link below to submit shout your outs!

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

(NEW) Plunge and Dunk 2025

Just about 1 month ago, our Cold Water Season kicked off with a very successful St. Mary's Splash at Point Lookout. Congratulations to Jeff Hagen and team on a great event!

Now we are looking forward to the Polar Bear Plunge and Deep Creek Dunk over the next 8 weeks!

We hope that you and your programs join us at these great events--- and don't forget to sign up your teams! It's a great opportunity to use these events as a fundraiser for your local program.

Visit: www.PlungeMD.com or www.DunkMD.com for info, to support a plunger/dunker or to sign up a team!

(NEW) Pickleball Update

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 (mzczarnowsky@somd.org) will be serving in that capacity.

(NEW) CSOA Virtual Session

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 this 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.

(NEW) Julian English competes at the Xperience Tournament

Special Olympics Maryland Athlete, Julian English was invited by Special Olympics Virginia to compete in their annual Xperience Tennis Tournament held in Charlottesville, VA. Each year, Special Olympics Virginia selects 32 of the top tennis players from around the country to compete in a 3-day singles tournament. We are very proud that this was Julian’s 8th year selected!

This year, Julian finished in 2nd place in Division 1B, competing against athletes from Virginia, Iowa, Texas, North Carolina, and Massachusetts. Congratulations, Julian, on a great tournament.

(NEW) Healthy Athletes highlighted by Kennedy Krieger

In 2024, Special Olympics Maryland and Kennedy Krieger continued their work with Healthy Athletes, and this year brought the Child and Family Health Intervention Pilot to Kennedy Krieger’s Early Childhood Development and Education Center in Baltimore County and Southeast Early Head Start program in Baltimore City. These programs were highlighted in Kennedy Krieger Magazine for January 2025.

Check out the article here: <https://www.kennedykrieger.org/stories/kennedy-krieger-magazine/january-2025/perfect-partnership>

(UPDATE) Athlete Registration Process Updates

Update: 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.***

New SOI Sports Rules Published

Special Olympics, Inc. recently published the 2024 updates for the Sports Rules, including Article 1 which has more “general” rules for sports. SOI updates its rules every two years based on input from its Sports Resource Teams and input from individual programs (countries).

For SOMD, ***ALL 2024 FALL SPORTS WILL CONTINUE TO USE THE 2022 RULES.*** This includes athletics (long distance running), bowling, cycling, flag football, powerlifting, soccer, tennis – we will not change rules in mid-season.

SOMD will begin using the updated sports rules with the 2024-25 winter sports season (alpine skiing, snowshoeing, basketball) and will review key rule changes during the pre-season sport-specific webinars.

Links to the updated rules, often including summaries of changes per sport, will be available shortly on SOMD's sport-specific Coach Resource Pages (CRPs) (www.somd.org/coach-resources/) as well as on the SOI resources page (resources.specialolympics.org).

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 Leader Quick Resource Guide

With so many new staff members, we have added an updated Quick Resource Guide to this Area Memo. As a reminder, this is not a comprehensive staff roster, but a list of functional areas/responsibilities most used by the Area Programs and the corresponding staff member. But as always, when in doubt, be in touch with your Region Director and we'll point you in the right direction!

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

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/tZwpcOmoqzloEtBGFXla3MGL34lbEGE5on9e
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-CrrTotHNZcxSLTDQC05j8PMQDRxs9
Basketball <i>Day 2 - 3v3 Trad/PDU, 5v5 PDU, Skills</i>	Tue, 3/18 7:30-9:00p	https://somid.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqdu6qrDwvHNzS3d80Y7GPNGb-TD8Lqu4j

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@somid.org,

Athletics (Track & Field / Long Distance Running)
Golf Snowshoeing *Locally Popular Sports: DanceSport,*
Powerlifting *Floor Hockey*

- **Jake Novick, Sports Director**

- jnovick@somid.org, 774.276.5861

Alpine Skiing Soccer *Locally Popular Sports: Duckpin Bowling,*
Bocce Tennis *Short Track Speed Skating,*

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

- **Steve Bennett, Senior Director, Competitions**

- sbennett@somid.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@somid.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