

Rapid City Flame Welcome Packet



Welcome to Rapid City Flame!

Welcome to Special Olympics South Dakota – Rapid City Flame! We are delighted that you have chosen to join thousands of other athletes, coaches, and volunteers throughout South Dakota in assisting children and adults with intellectual disabilities to participate in year-round sports training and friendly athletic competitions in a variety of sports. There are currently over 150 Flame athletes from Rapid City and its surrounding communities participating in an ever-increasing number of sports and opportunities with Rapid City Flame. Skilled coaches and volunteers create a fun and positive experience for the participating athletes and their families.

Special Olympics is a global movement whose goal is to create a world of inclusion and community, where every single person is accepted and welcomed, regardless of ability or disability, through the transformative power and joy of sport. We want our athletes to develop character, skills, and friendships, and above all else, have fun. Remember, they are all winners! In order to ensure that Rapid City Flame upholds these values, we have created this welcome packet to provide you with important information that will help familiarize you with our various policies and procedures.

Thank you for participating with Special Olympics South Dakota - Rapid City Flame! We could not succeed without your hard work and dedication!

Rapid City Flame contact information is as follows:

Telephone: 605.484.8425	Facebook: Rapid City Flame Special Olympics
Email: coaches@rcflame.org	Calendar: www.rcflame.org
Website: www.rcflame.org	Newsletter Signup: www.rcflame.org

Rapid City Flame Mission and Sports

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Rapid City Flame is a delegation for youth and young adults interested in participating in practices, tournaments, and special events. We offer the following sports:

- Athletics (Track & Field)
- Unified Basketball
- Bocce & Unified Bocce
- Bowling
- Alpine Skiing
- Unified Soccer
- Golf
- Powerlifting
- Unified Softball
- Swimming



What are Unified Sports?

Join the Inclusion Revolution! Unified Sports is a Special Olympics initiative that brings people with and without intellectual disabilities (Unified Partners) together on the same team to compete. Rapid City Flame is an inclusion leader in South Dakota and has expanded its basketball, softball, soccer, and bocce teams to include friends, neighbors, and relatives of similar abilities and ages. Unified teams provide training and competition opportunities that meaningfully challenge and involve all athletes and partners. Special Olympics sports rules ensure that everyone will have a fair and enjoyable competitive experience.

How Do I Become a Volunteer or Unified Partner?

Special Olympics – Rapid City Flame is always looking for volunteers and Unified Partners to assist with our program. The most important job is cheering on our athletes and providing encouragement and direction. Special Olympics would not exist today - and could not have been created - without the time, energy, dedication, and commitment of the more than 500,000 Special Olympics volunteers nationwide. There are many ways you can become involved...and Inspire Greatness! To participate in Area and State tournaments, volunteers and Unified Partners are asked to participate for the entire 8-week sport season (exceptions granted by Flame staff).

Specific areas where we value your assistance:

- Volunteer at Rapid City Flame practices and games.
- Help coaches measure times and measure skills for athlete registration.
- Help athletes learn the basic rules and skills of their sport.
- Help athletes stay focused on their tasks.
- Play on Unified Sports® teams and provide real-time support.
- Serve as a certified Special Olympics coach.
- Encourage members of your civic groups to volunteer their professional services to Special Olympics programs and events.
- Participate in one of our many fundraising events throughout the year.

Your first step to volunteer is simple: just show up and introduce yourself! By coming to a practice, you'll be able to see firsthand what we do. We'll supply you with all the necessary forms then, including a Volunteer-Unified Partner Application that must be completed and updated every three years. For more information, email coaches@rcflame.org.

How Did Special Olympics International Get Started?

Special Olympics was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who was concerned that children with intellectual disabilities had little opportunity to participate in athletic events. The inaugural International Special Olympics Games were held that year, at Soldier Field in Chicago, hosting three countries and 1,000 athletes. In 1971, the U.S. Olympic Committee gave the Special Olympics official approval to use the name "Olympics," making them the only organization to receive permission. Today, Special Olympics serves over 2 million athletes worldwide.



How Do I Become an Athlete?

Athletes are the heart and soul of Special Olympics. Competition brings together children with intellectual disabilities and provides them with the opportunity to learn new skills, make lasting friendships, and gain confidence – all while having fun! We welcome participants of all ability levels throughout the Black Hills region. We hold practices in the Rapid City area and participate in regional, state, and national competitions sponsored by Special Olympics South Dakota. To participate in regional and state tournaments, athletes must participate for the entire 8-week sport season (exceptions granted by Flame staff for illnesses and family emergencies).

Becoming an athlete is simple. Eligible participants must have an intellectual disability, be at least 8 years old, and possess an Individualized Education Program (IEP). There are other cases in which an individual is eligible, as well. Please email any questions to coaches@rcflame.org. Each athlete must have a completed Athlete Registration Form, including a physician signature prior to participation. Bring the completed form to any practice or mail it to PO Box 9780, Rapid City, SD 57709. Registration Forms are valid for three years.

Time Sensitive: Athlete Registration Forms must be turned in by the third practice of the season or the athlete will not be able to practice with the team.

That's it! Just turn in your registration form, come to a practice, and you are signed up!

What Skills Do I Need To Be An Athlete?

Athletes in every sport and event are grouped by age, gender, and ability – giving everyone a reasonable chance to win. For each event, athletes will compete against others of similar age and skill. All athletes are welcome regardless of skill level.

At Special Olympics there are no World Records because each athlete, whether in the fastest or slowest division, is valued and recognized equally. In every division, all athletes receive an award, from gold, silver, and bronze medals, to fourth through eighth place ribbons. This idea of equal ability groupings is the foundation for competition in Special Olympics and can be witnessed at all events, whether it's basketball, bowling, soccer, or softball. All athletes are given an equal chance to participate, perform, and be recognized for doing their best by their teammates, family, friends, and fans.

Do I Get a Uniform?

We distribute all uniforms prior to the first Area competition. Uniforms must be returned at the conclusion of the final Area competition unless the athlete is participating in State competition, in which case they will return the uniform after the state competition.



Can An Athlete Earn a High School Letter?

Participation in Rapid City Flame provides athletes with an opportunity to earn a school letter and letterman jacket from their home school. See the Coach for more information on this program.

What Competitions Are Available for Each Sport?

Each sports season consists of practices, area competitions, and state tournaments.

Black Hills Area Competitions

Our athletes attend Black Hills Area regional competitions, usually held in Rapid City or Spearfish. We automatically register all athletes for these events; however, we understand that illness, family emergencies, and other situations that may require an absence do occur. Please notify your Key Volunteer as soon as possible in the event that your athlete will be absent from an area competition. Attendance at the Black Hills Area competition is mandatory if an athlete wishes to attend the state tournament. In the event of an unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, funeral), an exception may be granted by the Coach.

Special Olympics South Dakota State Competitions

Special Olympics South Dakota state tournaments are alternately held in eastern and western South Dakota. Athletes and families planning on attending state tournaments must notify the sport's Key Volunteer within 15 days of the first practice. If you aren't 100 percent certain your athlete will attend, please go ahead and advise the Key Volunteer that you plan to attend. The deadline cutoff for registration is strictly enforced by Special Olympics South Dakota; once this date has passed it is impossible to add an athlete. Withdrawing from the tournament is allowed. Two choices are available for attending state tournaments:

1) Athletes May Travel to State Tournaments with Families and Caregivers

You may attend state tournaments with your athlete, if they are registered in advance. If your plans change, notify the Key Volunteer as soon as possible. You are responsible for your own transportation and lodging accommodations. In cases of financial hardship, there may be some scholarship funds available – check with the Coach.



2) Some Athletes May Travel to State Tournaments with the Team

A select number of athletes may travel with the team to state tournaments. Athletes wishing to travel with the team must have the Coach's approval and meet the following criteria:

- Independent in daily living skills and self-care.
- Follows directions.
- Shows respect, kindness, and courtesy toward volunteers, coaching staff, chaperones, and other athletes.
- Practices good sportsmanship on and off the playing field (including the bus, hotel, restaurants, etc.).
- Does not wander and will stay in a designated area, without supervision, for short periods of time.

Other requirements for traveling with the team may apply; these will vary by sport and are based on event location (distance from Rapid City) and availability of team volunteers and chaperones.



Special Olympics - Rapid City Flame is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all who participate to honor these values and embrace the spirit of Special Olympics by providing a supportive environment that emphasizes character and skill development. Please review the Codes of Conduct below and sign at the bottom of the form (athletes sign this page only).

Athlete Code of Conduct

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport and train regularly.
- I will listen to my coaches and officials and ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will not swear or insult other people.
- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke, or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics during training sessions, competitions, or games.
- I will not take drugs to enhance my performance.

_____ Athlete Signature

_____ Printed
Name

Family Members & Guardians Code of Conduct

- I will let my athlete choose the sport(s) in which he/she would like to participate.
- I will ensure my athlete's medical form is up to date, complete, and on file.
- I will learn the rules of the game and Special Olympics policies. Should I wish to protest, I will meet with coaches at an agreed-upon time and place.
- I will refrain from coaching my athlete unless I am the assigned coach.
- I will teach my athlete to play by the rules and resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will provide for the health and safety of all athletes by reporting suspicious behavior, talking to my child about personal safety, dropping off and picking up my child from Special Olympics events only during times designated by the organization, and taking any other reasonable measures to assist in the protection of athletes.

Coach, Volunteer, and Unified Partner Code of Conduct



- I will respect the talent, developmental stage, and goals of each athlete, and ensure everybody enjoys a positive experience.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge their potential and are appropriate for their ability.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of their ability during all preliminaries and final heats in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.
- I will be fair, considerate, and honest with athletes and communicate using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will seek continual personal improvement through performance evaluations and ongoing education.
- Coaches - I will have a thorough knowledge of the rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach and will develop a plan for a regular training program.
- Coaches - I will keep copies of the medical, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- Coaches - I will review each athlete's medical form and be aware of any limitations on their participation, encouraging them to seek medical advice when required.
- I will maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes as those who are healthy and will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics prohibition on dating athletes.

Volunteers, Chaperones and Unified Partners Traveling to State Events

- I will be available, as needed, when on trips. I will be responsible for ensuring all athletes assigned to me are up, attending meals, and on time to all events.
- I will enforce "lights out" and "room in" times and ensure the "no co-ed visitation" rule is strictly adhered to.
- I will ensure any athlete at the hotel is accompanied by a chaperone at all times. If an athlete becomes ill and must remain in bed during activities, a chaperone will be designated to stay in close proximity to the ill student in case medical attention is needed. In the event of a trip to the emergency room, the Head Coach and/or Head Chaperone will be notified, and the accompanying chaperone will be given access to that athlete's medical release forms.
- I will defer to the Head Chaperone for all duties, times, and responsibilities, and understand that the needs of the delegation take priority over a chaperone's needs.
- If I disagree with something on the trip, I will bring it up privately with the appropriate person. Behavior or non-compliance issues will be handled by the Head Coach or Key Volunteer with the person who witnessed the incident present. At no time will an athlete be corrected privately one-on-one. If a Head Coach or Key Volunteer needs to deal with an issue regarding an athlete of the opposite gender, they will have another person of the same gender as the athlete present.



- The Key Volunteer is responsible for all finances related to the trip, including ensuring the non-profit Sales Exempt Tax Form is used at all establishments accepting it, retaining all receipts, and completing the check register accurately.
- The Key Volunteer is responsible for all athletes' medication and physical forms and will dispense medications according to directions provided by parents/guardians. If an athlete requires a non-prescription medication not provided by parents/guardians, the Key Volunteer must give permission.

Additionally, all Special Olympics participants agree to observe the following codes for Sportsmanship and Professional Conduct:

Sportsmanship

- I will practice good sportsmanship at all times by displaying kindness, respect, courtesy, and positive support for all athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators during practices and competitions.
- I will remember that athletes participate to have fun and will emphasize that all athletes are winners, offering praise for competing fairly and trying their best.
- I will prioritize skill development and practices over competition, promoting the emotional and physical well-being of the athletes over winning.
- I will respect the official and their coach's authority and will never question or confront them during competitions or games.
- I will refrain from engaging in any type of unsportsmanlike conduct toward athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators.
- I will attend all team events including Opening Ceremonies, Competitions, Banquets, Dances, etc., unless granted an exception.
- I understand that in order to compete at State events, all athletes must play at the area level first.

Professional Conduct

- I will ensure my language, manner, dress, punctuality, and preparation all demonstrate high standards and will avoid using profanity or insulting others.
- I will be a positive role model and treat everybody equally regardless of race, creed, sex, ethnic origin, religion, or ability. This includes all athletes, coaches, volunteers, and spectators.
- I will not drink alcohol or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics during training sessions, competitions, and games, and will smoke in designated areas only.
- I will refrain from directing any form of personal abuse (e.g., inappropriate sexual advances and verbal, physical, or emotional abuse) toward others and will be alert to any form of abuse.



Code of Conduct Signature Page

I have read the Codes of Conduct and agree to abide by them.

_____ Signature

_____ Printed Name

_____ Date
(Form valid for one year)

_____ Role
(Parent, Volunteer, Family, Unified Partner, Coach)

Please check the sports and events you participate in (listed from January to December):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Softball / Tball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Track & Field | <input type="checkbox"/> Bocce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swim | <input type="checkbox"/> Bowling (Fall) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Powerlift | <input type="checkbox"/> Ski |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bowling (Summer) | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events |