2020 VOLLEYBALL SEASON OVERVIEW

Registration
- Programs must abide by registration deadlines. Programs that do not meet registration deadlines will not be eligible to compete
- In order to attend any event or practice all participants must have up to date forms and/or certifications on file with Special Olympics Massachusetts by published deadline

Waivers
- In order to advance to a State level season ending tournament (summer games) all participants must compete at and qualify through a regional qualifier. No team waivers will be granted.
- An athlete who is sick or injured may be granted a waiver if Special Olympics MA is notified in advance or immediately after tournament
- Waivers will not be giving out for behavioral issues or athlete doesn't feel like attending that day

Sport Resources
A variety of coaching resources are available for download at the Special Olympics sport resource page (https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials). These include
- Sport Essentials
  - Article One / Coaching S.O. Athlete / Sport Rules / Coaching Guides / Athlete & Coach Development Models
- Unified Sports
  - Online Certification Course / Unified Sport Models / Team Assessment Tools / Principles of Meaningful Involvement / Tutorial Videos / Unified Guidelines

Age Guidelines Team Sports
- 8-15
- 16-21
- 22+
- These are guidelines athletes maybe bumped up in age group to make competitive divisions. But will not be bumped up an age group that spans two age groups. Divisioning comes down to ability being the determining factor.
- Athletes age is determined by age of athlete at State Games

Modified Serve
- Athletes who need to serve from the modified serve line must be tested at the Springfield College Qualifying Tournament
  - If participants are not tested for the modified serve at the Qualifying Tournament they will not be eligible to serve from the modified line during Summer Games competition.
Uniform Guidelines for Volleyball *(Participants & Coaches)*

- **Players**
  - Matching tops with numbers
  - Matching shorts all players must be in same color shorts
    - Same color yoga pants or sweats are allowed
  - If players wear undershirts then all players must have same color undershirt
- **Coaches**
  - Special Olympics Massachusetts branded Gear or dress shirt
  - Khaki Pants or shorts or black sweat pants. No ripped jeans or jean shorts

**Website / Event Info**

- All Events are posted to the calendar page Special Olympics MA website.
- Event pages will include:
  - Programs assigned to event
  - Event timelines
  - Event contact Information and On site leaders
  - Event Schedule with participation #’s by event
  - Weather policy
- **Spring Season Resource Page**
  - Links to events
  - Sport rules
  - Registration form

**Levels of Competition**

- **Qualifying Tournament**
  - In order to advance on to State Summer Games athletes must participate in a qualifying tournament
  - Medals and ribbons will be awarded based on placement with in their division
  - Gold medal winners automatically advance. Silver – 6th place will advance by place until quota is full
- **Season Ending State Tournaments**
  - **Summer Games**
    - Criteria to attend: must have competed at a qualifying tournament and received a pre-determined award. No waivers will be granted
    - Have attended all assigned competition events
    - Medals and ribbons will be awarded based on teams placement.
VOLLEYBALL SEASON CALENDAR

- **Registration Deadlines**
  - Qualifying Tournament – April 8, 2020
  - Season Ending Tournament Summer Games – May 20, 2020

- **Qualifying Tournaments**
  - Springfield College – April 26, 2020

- **Season Ending State Tournaments**
  - Summer Games June 12-14, 2020
  - Swimming is back at Harvard for Summer Games

**Best Practices of a Safe Coach**

The following bullets are simple best practices of a safe coach and reminders for all Special Olympic Massachusetts coach

- Limit 1 to 1 interaction with athletes
  - always be within the sight line or ear shot of others
- Always submit an incident report after an injury
- Follow injury and concussion return to play policy
- Never distribute any medication that is not in its original container
- Mandated reporter
  - SOMA coaches are not mandated reporters,
  - you know your athletes and if you suspect that they are subject to any abuse or in immediate danger do not hesitate to notify the police and Special Olympics staff
- Before any trip, event or overnight
  - review code of conduct
  - clearly explain rules and behavior expectations for all (athletes, chaperones, partners)
- Create a session long training plan that sets goals that focus on athlete development and skill improvement

**Smoking, Drinking, Illegal Substances**

- Special Olympics Massachusetts has established that all competition venues, housing facilities, ceremonies venues, and Olympic Towns will be alcohol, tobacco, cannabis (of any form), non-control substances & vaping free. Any coach, chaperone, volunteer, family member or athlete in violation of the Policy will face disciplinary action from SOMA, which could result in the violating individual(s) being sent home and suspended from future participation. SOMA Coaches, Chaperones, Volunteers, Family Members or Athletes must agree to abstain from the consumption of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, cannabis, and vaping during the entire course of all Special Olympics Massachusetts competition events.

- No concealed weapons, firearms are allowed at any Special Olympics Massachusetts event!
Coach Education Criteria

Below is the most current version of the United States Coaches Education system that is required of all Special Olympics coaches as outlined by Special Olympics North America. This progression chart was approved by the Special Olympics United States Leadership Committee in Fall of 2018.

Sport Assistant Coach
- Valid Class A Form
- Special Olympics MA General Orientation
- Concussion Certification
- Protective Behaviors

Level 1 - Certified Coach (core coach knowledge)

Traditional Special Olympics Coach
- All Sport Assistant Coach Requirements
- Coaching Special Olympics Athlete
  - Online course via Human Kinetics Coach Education
  - Or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

Unified Sports
- All Sport Assistant Coach Requirements
- Coaching Unified Sports
  - online Unified Sports course via NFHS
  - Or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

Level 2 - Certified Coach (Sports Specific Knowledge)

Traditional Special Olympics and Unified Sports
- All Level 1 requirements
- Sports Specific Course
  - Online for those sports where online courses have been developed
  - or in person sport specific training

** NOTE- Level required of Head Coaches attending a USA Games in specific sport being coached

Level 3 - Certified Coach (Advanced Coaching Knowledge)
- All Level 2 requirements
- Principles of Coaching
  - or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

** NOTE- Level required of Head Coaches attending a World Games in specific sport being coached

If you have any questions about your certification status or certification status of the coaches in your program please contact your Business Operations contact