

SpecialOlympics.org



2014 Special Olympics Style Guide

Special Olympics





Preface

Using a consistent writing style and form in all Special Olympics communications enhances the clarity and professionalism of our materials. In general, Special Olympics follows the Associated Press Stylebook, one of the most widely used guides, along with Webster's New World College Dictionary (the dictionary recommended by AP).

Please note: The 2014 Special Olympics Style Guide is designed as a quick reference; it is not meant to be a glossary of every term or program. Instead, the Style Guide focuses on some of the most commonly asked questions, explains correct usage, and points out where Special Olympics style diverges from AP style.

Our alphabetical listing of common terms is followed – on p. 21 – by basic guidance on the most common style errors. If you have suggestions or questions, please feel free to ask a member of the Communications Department or email kmckenna@specialolympics.org.



academic degrees

Use only if requested or pertinent. Spell out degrees in text: use bachelor's degree, master's degree, etc. After someone's full name, use abbreviations: Ph.D., M.D.

ages

Always use numbers. Examples: Special Olympics athletes can range in age from 8 to over 80. Young Athletes are 2 to 7 years old.

a.m., p.m.

Lowercase with periods.

among, between

Use among for more than two items, between for two items. Examples: The funds were divided among Tom, Dick and Harry. The argument was between Romulus and Remus.

articles (newspaper, magazine, etc.)

Place the headlines/titles of newspaper, magazine and other publication articles in quotes. Do not italicize.

athlete

Lowercase in all uses.

athlete oath

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." On first mention, call it the Special Olympics athlete oath; thereafter, the oath. NOTE: This is not "the Special Olympics oath."

Athlete Leadership

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership on first reference, Athlete Leadership thereafter. NOTE: We no longer use the term Athlete Leadership Programs or ALPs. We simply refer to Athlete Leadership; no acronym or abbreviation needed.

A Very Special Christmas®

Title of ongoing series of holiday music compilation albums, CDs and DVDs benefiting the Christmas Record Grant program. Spell out on first reference; AVSC thereafter.

Board of Directors, Special Olympics International Board of Directors

Always capitalize. We refer to our Board as the Special Olympics International Board of Directors; on second reference, we refer to the Board of Directors. Someone can be called a Member or Director of the International Board of Directors, a Board Member, or a Member of the Board. Please do not say "Board Director."

Example: Michelle Kwan, Director, Special Olympics International Board of Directors. Also: Bart Conner, Member of the Special Olympics International Board of Directors. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP Style.)



book titles

Place in quotes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Do not hyphenate. Do not use ampersand.

capital, capitol

A capital is the city where a seat of government is located. A capitol is a government building, i.e., the U.S. Capitol.

capitalization

- Always capitalize Program when referring to Special Olympics Programs.
Example: The Program held its first-ever competition in October 2000.
- When referring to activities and initiatives, only capitalize “program” when it is part of an official acronym. Example: Motor Activities Training Program.
- Capitalize an official title, whether it comes before or after the individual’s name. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

Examples: Special Olympics Chairman Timothy P. Shriver addressed the meeting. Janet Froetscher, Chief Executive Officer, delivered a videotaped message.

Celsius

Use this term rather than centigrade for the temperature scale based on the metric system.

When giving a Celsius temperature, use these forms: 40 C or 40 degrees Celsius.

In Special Olympics documents, we generally express temperature using the Fahrenheit scale and provide the Celsius equivalent in parentheses.

Example: 77 F (25 C).

center, centre

Both spellings are fine. This extends to other differences in British English/American English, including behavior/behaviour, program/programmes, honor/honour, etc.

chat room, chat page

Two words, lowercase.

Christmas Record Grant (CRG) or Christmas Record Trust (CRT)

Capitalize Christmas Record Grant or Christmas Record Trust. In subsequent mentions, use CRG or CRT. Also: lowercase record grants.

Closing Ceremony

Capitalize. Treat as singular. Examples: The Closing Ceremony starts at 5 p.m. BUT: Thousands of athletes plan to attend both Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

commas

Use commas to separate elements in a complex series; do not use in a simple series.

Examples: The flag is red, white and blue. BUT: “... encourage relationships between schools and Programs, engage youth with and without disabilities, and build communities.”

NOTE: Commas always go inside quotation marks. As in: “This is how it should look,” she said. “Even if it’s an incomplete sentence,” he added.

**company**

Spell out when used as part of a company name. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP style.) Example: Otis Elevator Company.

Cops on Doughnut Shops®

For more than a decade, this partnership between Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics organizers and Krispy Kreme stores has raised funds and awareness for Special Olympics.

corporation

Spell out when used as part of a company name. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP style.) Example: Microsoft Corporation.

currency

For the benefit of our international audience, use US\$ when referring to American currency. Example: Special Olympics received a grant of US\$250,000.

dates

Whenever possible, we follow the world's most widely used construction for dates – date-month-year: 28 November 2014. No comma. Months are spelled out. Also, please do not use a conversational form, as in September 22nd through September 24th. Correct form would be: 22-24 September. Also correct: The Summer Games are set for 25 July – 2 August 2015. (This is Special Olympics global style, contrary to AP style.)

directions

In general, lowercase north, south, northwest, northern, southern, etc., when they indicate compass direction. Capitalize when they designate regions, especially in the United States. Examples: He drove west, then along the southern coast. A storm system that developed in the Midwest is heading toward the East Coast.

disabilities

Use “people first” language: refer to a person with a disability – not a disabled person. Never use crippled, handicapped, or mentally disabled or retarded. If applicable, refer to a person who uses a wheelchair, not as someone confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair-bound; or a person with autism, not suffering from autism.

divisioning

Lowercase. Special Olympics competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. This practice marks one of the fundamental differences between Special Olympics competitions and those of most other sports organizations.

Down syndrome

Not Downs syndrome or Downs Syndrome. The word syndrome is lowercase.

email

No hyphen.



exams

This is the preferred term to describe what takes place at Special Olympics Healthy Athletes events or clinics. Please note that we no longer use the word “screenings.”

eyeglasses

One word.

Fahrenheit

The temperature scale commonly used in the United States. When giving a Fahrenheit temperature, use these forms: 70 F or 70 degrees Fahrenheit. In Special Olympics documents, we generally express temperature using the Fahrenheit scale and provide the Celsius equivalent in parentheses. Example: 77 F (25 C).

Family Support Network

Use Special Olympics Family Support Network on first reference, Family Support Network thereafter.

Federal

Generally lowercase. Capitalize only when it is part of a proper title.
Example: The federal building houses the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Fédération Internationale de Basketball Association (FIBA)

The world governing body for basketball. Spell out on first reference; abbreviate thereafter.

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

The world governing body for football (soccer). Spell out on first reference; abbreviate thereafter.

Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB)

International governing body for the sport of volleyball. Spell out on first reference, then abbreviate.

fewer, less

In general, use fewer for individual items, less for bulk or quantity.
Examples: Fewer than 10 applicants called about the position. I had less than US\$10 in my pocket.

Final Leg

Capitalize, do not use quotes. A Final Leg consists of the last miles of a Law Enforcement Torch Run® in the days leading up to the Opening Ceremony of a Special Olympics competitive event. See Law Enforcement Torch Run.

Flame of Hope

No quotes, no italics. The torch carried in the Law Enforcement Torch Run® and used to light the cauldron at Special Olympics Games. There is no registered trademark.

fundraiser, fundraising

Do not hyphenate.



Games

Capitalize in all instances when referring to Special Olympics Games. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP style.) Treat as a collective plural rather than a collective singular expression. Example: The World Summer Games were held in Athens, Greece. NOT: “was held.”

NOTE: When naming Games, put Special Olympics first whenever possible. The idea is for Special Olympics to stand out, rather than the year or location. Preferred: Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017, Styria, Austria. Not: 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games, Nagano, Japan.

Summer Games and Winter Games may also be referred to chronologically. See below for guidance.

- **World Games**

Capitalize. Designate the season in title of World Games, unless otherwise specified. After first reference, events may be referred to as World Games, the 2013 (or whichever year) Games, or the Games, if the meaning is clear within the context. See below list of past and upcoming World Games for full titles.

- **National Games**

Capitalize. Always identify the event (as in USA Games) as well as the season for Programs that hold Games for both summer and winter sports (e.g., Special Olympics Austria National Winter Games). For Programs that hold infrequent National Games, identify the event as National Games (e.g., Special Olympics Tanzania National Games—not mentioning the season).

- **U.S. State Games**

Capitalize. Identify the season for Programs that hold Games for both summer and winter sports (e.g., Special Olympics Maryland Summer Games).

- **local Games**

Capitalize Games, lowercase local.

- **Other**

Capitalize multinational or multistate events. Examples:

- Special Olympics 2013 Asia-Pacific Games
- Mid-Atlantic Invitational Golf Tournament
- Special Olympics European Summer Games, Antwerp 2014

Special Olympics World Summer and Winter Games

(Note the change from “International” to “World” in 1991)

1968

1st International Summer Games
Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois, USA

1970

2nd International Special Olympics Summer Games
Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois, USA



1972

3rd International Special Olympics Summer Games
University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA

1975

4th International Special Olympics Summer Games
Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, USA

1977

1st International Special Olympics Winter Games
Steamboat Springs, Colorado, USA

1979

5th International Special Olympics Summer Games
State University of New York at Brockport, Brockport, New York, USA

1981

2nd International Special Olympics Winter Games
Stowe and the Village of Smugglers' Notch, Vermont, USA

1983

6th International Special Olympics Summer Games
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

1985

3rd International Special Olympics Winter Games
Park City, Utah, US

1987

7th International Special Olympics Summer Games
University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College, South Bend, Indiana, USA

1989

4th International Special Olympics Winter Games
Reno, Nevada, and Lake Tahoe, California, USA

1991

8th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

1993

5th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Salzburg and Schladming, Austria

1995

9th Special Olympics World Summer Games
New Haven, Connecticut, USA

1997

6th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Toronto and Collingwood, Ontario, Canada

1999

10th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

2001

7th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Anchorage, Alaska, USA

2003

11th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Dublin, Ireland



2005

8th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Nagano, Japan

2007

12th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Shanghai, China

or

Special Olympics World Summer Games, Shanghai 2007

2009

9th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Idaho, USA

or

Special Olympics World Winter Games, Idaho USA 2009

2011

13th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Athens, Greece

or

Special Olympics World Summer Games, Athens 2011

2013

10th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea

or

Special Olympics World Winter Games, PyeongChang 2013

2015

14th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Los Angeles, USA

or

Special Olympics World Games, Los Angeles 2015

2017

11th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Styria, Austria

or

Special Olympics World Winter Games, Austria 2017

Additional note: some computer software programs automatically use a “superscript” for the ordinal, while others do not. Either way is fine.

Games Management Software

Spell out and capitalize on first mention; abbreviate as GMS thereafter. Software used by Special Olympics for Games registration, divisioning and results.

Games Organizing Committee

An organization formed to plan, organize, finance and conduct the Special Olympics World Games. On first mention, spell out and capitalize; also include a reference to the specific event (eg the Games Organizing Committee for the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games). Abbreviate as GOC thereafter.

**geographic names**

Spell out names of countries, states and cities. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) For U.S. state names, add USA afterwards. Examples: The 2010 Special Olympics USA Games were held in and around Lincoln, Nebraska, USA. Also, Special Olympics Rhode Island (USA) hosted a competition in the fall.

Get Into It®

Formerly known as SO Get Into It. A K-12 school curriculum developed by Special Olympics and distributed to educational institutions to encourage students to respect and embrace the differences and similarities in people with and without intellectual disabilities.

Global Messengers

Always capitalize. The term refers to Special Olympics athletes who have received training to become spokespeople for people with intellectual disabilities and to raise awareness of Special Olympics. Athletes who have been through that training anywhere in the world are referred to as Special Olympics [Program name] Global Messengers (as in, Special Olympics China Global Messengers).

In addition, every few years, 12 athletes are chosen from Programs around the world to serve two- or four-year terms as spokespersons for the Special Olympics Movement; they are referred to as Special Olympics Sargent Shriver International Global Messengers.

GMS

See Games Management Software.

GOC

See Games Organizing Committee.

good will, goodwill

The noun is two words. The adjective is one word.

grass roots

Two words; hyphenate when used as an adjective.

Guardians of the Flame®

Capitalize, no quotes. Describes law enforcement officers participating who take part in a Torch Run, including a Final Leg. See Final Leg.

Heads of Delegations

Capitalize. After first reference, can be abbreviated as HOD. A World Games term referring to the heads of delegations that will be competing at the Games.

Heads of Delegation Seminar

Formerly called the Heads of Delegation Conference. Held one year prior to a World Games (and at the World Games location), the meetings offer an overview of World Games for Heads of Delegations.

Health care

Two words, no hyphen.

10 Special Olympics



Healthy Athletes®

Use Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® on first reference; Healthy Athletes thereafter. The Healthy Athletes name is an umbrella for seven disciplines:

- Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes® (vision)*
- Special Olympics Special Smiles® (dental)
- Special Olympics Healthy Hearing (hearing)
- Special Olympics FUNFitness (physical therapy and nutritional advice)
- Special Olympics Health Promotion (general health and fitness)
- Special Olympics Fit Feet (podiatry)
- Special Olympics MedFest® (sports physical exam)

*This is a partnership between Special Olympics and Lions Clubs International. Always use the full name as shown above on first reference; use Opening Eyes thereafter.

When mentioning any of the Healthy Athletes disciplines, include Special Olympics on first reference, as in: Special Olympics Special Smiles®.

Host Town program

This involves cities and towns surrounding a World Games location that volunteer to host Special Olympics athlete delegations for several days prior to the Games Opening Ceremony. The Host Town – or Host Towns – program allows athletes to rest, acclimate and train prior to competing at World Games.

intellectual disabilities

As of 2004, this is the official term used by Special Olympics to refer to the population we serve. Use “people first” language: children and adults with intellectual disabilities, never mentally or intellectually disabled person, or person suffering from, afflicted with or a victim of intellectual disabilities. Use the singular term when referring to one person, e.g., “an individual with an intellectual disability,” and the plural when referring to more than one person, e.g., “adults and children with intellectual disabilities.”

NOTE: May be abbreviated as “ID” on second reference.

International Association of Chiefs of Police

Abbreviate as IACP after first mention. The founding law enforcement organization of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics.

Internet

Capitalize.

Korea

The Special Olympics Program is located in Korea. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) However, when necessary, use Republic of Korea or South Korea to identify the country that hosted the 2013 World Winter Games. Example: The 10th Special Olympics World Winter Games were held in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Kosovo

The official name is Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99. (UNSCR = UN Security Council Resolution). There is currently no abbreviation for Kosovo. Do not refer to it simply as Kosovo, unless on second reference.

**Law Enforcement Torch Run®**

Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics on first reference; use Law Enforcement Torch Run, Torch Run or LETR thereafter. The first use of the full title should include the registration symbol ® after the word “Run.” Law enforcement officers carry the Flame of Hope (torch) prior to a Special Olympics competition to raise funds for and awareness of the Special Olympics Movement worldwide. Officers involved in the Law Enforcement Torch Run are also called Guardians of the Flame. NOTE: law enforcement officer is lowercase, no hyphens. See also Final Leg, Flame of Hope.

long-distance

Hyphenate as a compound modifier. Examples: She has been training to be a long-distance runner. BUT: It’s a long distance to the beach.

long jump

As a noun, two words. As an adjective, hyphenate.

Examples: He competed in the long jump. She won a medal in the long-jump event.

longtime

One word as a compound modifier.

Examples: They are longtime supporters of Special Olympics. They’ve been friends a long time.

Macedonia

Refer to this country as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Abbreviate as FYR Macedonia. Do not just use Macedonia alone.

magazines

Place in quotes. Lowercase “magazine” unless it is part of the title of the publication; do not italicize the word “magazine.” (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) Examples: “Harper’s Magazine,” “Newsweek” magazine.

measurements

All Special Olympics documents should include both metric and U.S. measuring systems.

- foot—the basic unit of length in the U.S. measuring system. The metric equivalent is exactly 30.48 centimeters.
- kilometer—the metric term for 1,000 meters. A kilometer is equal to approximately 3,281 feet or five-eighths (0.62) of a mile. NOTE: Abbreviate as km.
- knot—one nautical mile.
- meter—the basic unit of length in the metric system. It is defined as being equal to approximately 39.37 inches. NOTE: Abbreviate as m.

mental retardation

Do not use. This outdated wording was eliminated from U.S. federal health, education and labor policy by the passage of Rosa’s Law in 2010. It has been replaced with the term “intellectual disability.” In descriptions, please use “people first” language, as in: an “individual with an intellectual disability” or children and adults with “intellectual disabilities.”



mid

No hyphen unless followed by a number or a capital letter. Examples: midterm exam, mid-April, mid-1930s.

millions, billions

Use figures with million or billion. Example: Special Olympics serves more than 4.2 million athletes.

Minister

Capitalize before or after a person's name. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

Example: Yasmina Baddou, Minister of Health, Morocco.

Ministry

As a government entity, capitalize. Example: the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Education.

Motor Activities Training Program

Abbreviate as MATP after first mention. A program specially designed for individuals with such severe intellectual disabilities that they cannot benefit from standard Special Olympics training and competitive programs.

movement

Capitalize on first reference when referring to the global agenda and actions of Special Olympics, only when it directly follows the name Special Olympics. On second reference, use lowercase. Examples: His speech marked a turning point in the Special Olympics Movement. She has been one of the greatest supporters of the movement.

movies, musicals, operas

Place in quotes.

multi

In general, no hyphen. Examples: multinational, multiregional, multistate.

National Director

Always capitalize. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

National Games

Always capitalize. See Games.

the Netherlands

The word "the" is lowercase.

Example: The 2000 Special Olympics European Games were held in Groningen, the Netherlands.

nonprofit

One word, no hyphen.

**numerals**

Spell out numbers one through nine, except for ages. Use figures for 10 and above.
Examples: Special Olympics has seven Regional offices. A delegation of 23 athletes is expected.
NOTE: Follow the same rule for most ordinals (first, second, third, etc.) UNLESS they're used to form a name/title. Example: The 8th Special Olympics World Winter Games were held in Nagano, Japan.

Olympic-type or Olympics-style sports

Used to describe the more than 32 sports offered to Special Olympics athletes. Hyphenate.

online

One word.

open water swimming

Lower case. No hyphen.

Opening Ceremony

Capitalize. Treat as singular. The Opening Ceremony was held at the University of Nebraska.
Also note: Many volunteers worked at both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

Palestinian Authority

Not Palestine. However, the Special Olympics Program in the region is referred to as Special Olympics Palestine.

Parade of Athletes

Capitalize. The procession of athletes at the start of an Opening Ceremony.

partner

Not capitalized. Refers to half of a Unified pair. Example: The Unified Sports tennis match included an athlete from Costa Rica and a partner from Turkey.

percent

One word. Use figures only, as in: 3 percent, 50 percent.

Plane Pull[®]

A Law Enforcement Torch Run[®] for Special Olympics fundraiser. Capitalize.

Polar Plunge[®]

Or Polar Bear Plunge (without the registration mark). A Law Enforcement Torch Run[®] for Special Olympics fundraiser. Capitalize.

prefixes

In general, do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant.

- Use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel (e.g., pre-existing)
- Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized (pre-Colombian).
- Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes (e.g., sub-subparagraph).



Preliminary Games

Capitalized. This term is preferred over Test Games, but either one is acceptable. May be shortened to Pre-Games. Invitational Games may also be used.

President, the President

Always capitalize. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

Prime Minister, the Prime Minister

Always capitalize. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

Programs

The word "Program" is always capitalized when referring to a Special Olympics Program to differentiate it from initiatives and activities.

Example: Special Olympics Australia's National Games in April 2010 were one of the Program's most successful ever.

- **National Programs**

Capitalize.

Example: Representatives of nine National Programs attended the seminar.

In National Program names, "Special Olympics" precedes the country name (Special Olympics Malawi, not Malawi Special Olympics).

- **State and Provincial Programs**

In state and provincial Program names, "Special Olympics" always precedes the state or province name.

Examples: Special Olympics Massachusetts, Special Olympics District of Columbia, Special Olympics Ontario.

The same rule applies to city Programs. Example: Special Olympics Toronto.

Project UNIFY®

Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is an education-based project that uses sports and education programs to develop school communities where all youth – with and without intellectual disabilities – work together toward greater respect and dignity for people with intellectual disabilities.

quotation marks

Please note that commas and periods always go inside quotation marks, even with sentence fragments. Example: We call this "an easy rule." NOT: We call this "an easy rule".

®

Registered trademark symbol is used only on first reference.

R-word

Note hyphen and capital "R." Refers to the word "retard" or the word "retarded." Use of these terms can hurt millions of people with intellectual disabilities, their families and friends.



Regions (Special Olympics)

With a capital "R." Always use the full Special Olympics Region name on first reference, as in: Special Olympics Europe Eurasia, not SOEE. Special Olympics is organized into seven Regions. The regional offices provide training and support to their area Programs.

- Special Olympics Africa
- Special Olympics Asia Pacific
- Special Olympics East Asia
- Special Olympics Europe Eurasia
- Special Olympics Latin America
- Special Olympics Middle East/North Africa
- Special Olympics North America

Sargent Shriver International Global Messengers

See Global Messengers.

screenings

Do not use. Exams is the preferred word to describe what takes place at Special Olympics Healthy Athletes events or clinics.

School Enrichment Program

Capitalize. A World Games initiative in which school children in the region where Games are being held are made aware of the Special Olympics Movement -- and how they can take part.

semicolon

Use to separate complex information or lists beyond what a comma can convey; also to link independent clauses. If these clauses get too unwieldy, however, consider writing separate sentences.

Shriver family members involved in Special Olympics

Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Founder (Mrs. Shriver or EKS on second reference)

Sargent Shriver, former President and Chairman of the Board

Timothy P. Shriver, Special Olympics Chairman*

Maria Shriver, Member, International Board of Directors

Bobby Shriver, former Board Member, also producer of "A Very Special Christmas" record/CD/DVD series

*NOTE: When mentioning the Special Olympics Chairman in introductions, please use Dr. Timothy P. Shriver. For documents and formal correspondence, his signature is Timothy P. Shriver, Ph.D. For all else, including press releases and anything on the website, use Tim Shriver (plus his title on first reference).

Soldier Field

In Chicago, this is the site of the 1st International Special Olympics Summer Games in 1968 and the 2nd International Special Olympics Summer Games in 1970.



Special Olympics

The preferred name for general usage is Special Olympics. The official name is Special Olympics, Inc. (not Special Olympics International).

Do NOT say: “the” Special Olympics or Special Olympic. If possible, avoid the possessive (Special Olympics’); never use Special Olympics’s.

Also: Do not use the abbreviations SOI or SO in any public document, though informal use is accepted.

Special Olympics athlete oath

See athlete oath.

Special Olympics athletes

Lowercase. They are not Special Olympians.

Special Olympics Team USA

Always use Special Olympics Team USA, not just Team USA. (Team USA – without the words Special Olympics – refers to the U.S. Olympic team.) Do not use periods in USA. Special Olympics Team USA is the U.S. delegation to a Special Olympics World Games.

sports

Individual sports are not capitalized in text.

Examples: The tennis competitions are today; bocce starts tomorrow.

Athletes can compete in 33 sports, including official summer sports, official winter sports and recognized sports. Special Olympics also offers some demonstration sports.

- Official summer sports: Official sports are those that Special Olympics recognizes as being part of the movement’s sports training and competition.

aquatics (swimming)

athletics (track and field)

badminton

basketball

bocce

bowling

cycling

equestrian sports

football (soccer). NOTE: Soccer, in parentheses, appears after “football” at the first mention so that readers will not confuse the sport with American football.

golf

gymnastics (artistic and rhythmic)

handball

judo

powerlifting

roller skating

sailing

softball

table tennis

tennis

volleyball



- Official winter sports: Official sports are those that Special Olympics recognizes as being part of the movement's sports training and competition.

alpine skiing

cross-country skiing

figure skating (Hyphenate only when used as a compound adjective, e.g., figure-skating venue)

floorball (new in 2014)

floor hockey (Hyphenate only when used as a compound adjective, e.g., floor-hockey stick)

snowboarding

short track speedskating (Hyphenate only when used as a compound adjective, e.g., the short-track speedskating competition)

snowshoeing

- Recognized sports: Sports that are not classified by Special Olympics as official sports, but which Special Olympics authorizes for inclusion in its sports training and competition programs. These sports have participation in at least 12 accredited Programs and at least two regions.

cricket

kayaking

netball

- Demonstration sports: These are sports that take place only at a Games event. Examples include open water swimming and beach volleyball.
- Locally popular sports: Programs may offer sports – such as flag football – that are locally popular but are not considered official or recognized sports.

Sports Experience

Not Sport Experience. A Special Olympics Sports Experience brings people together in an engaging environment, allowing participants to experience the talents and personalities of Special Olympics athletes.

Spread the Word to End the Word®

Capitalized. The campaign for mutual respect and dignity that has spread across the United States and around the globe, involving people of all ages – from high schools to college campuses and corporate offices. The goal of Spread the Word to End the Word is for people to think about the hurtful and disparaging uses of the word “retard” and pledge to stop using it.



Strategic Plan

Use Special Olympics Strategic Plan on first reference, Strategic Plan on second reference when referring to the organization's vision and strategy for 2011-2015. Capitalize references to the plan framework, including Athlete Experience, as well as pillars that Advance Quality Sports and Competitions, Build Communities, Connect Fans & Funds, Define Movement Leadership and Establish Sustainable Capabilities.

Team USA

See Special Olympics Team USA.

Technical Delegates

May be abbreviated as TDs on second reference

Tip-A-Cop®

Capitalize (including the "A") and use hyphens. A Law Enforcement Torch Run® fundraising event in which officers assist with waiting tables at a restaurant and collect "tip" donations for Special Olympics.

T-shirt

Capitalize the "T."

Titles

Titles are capitalized when used before or after a name. No commas are needed if the name goes first. Examples: Janet Froetscher, Chief Executive Officer, will deliver remarks at Regional Games. Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver is the featured speaker. NOT: Special Olympics Chairman, Tim Shriver, is the featured speaker.

Torch Lighting Ceremony

Always capitalize.

Torch Run

Use Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics on first reference. Law Enforcement Torch Run, Torch Run, or LETR thereafter.

toward

Not towards.

Train-the-Trainer

Hyphenated and capitalized.

UEFA

Union des Associations Européennes de Football. The governing body of European football associations.

Special Olympics Unified Sports®

On first reference, refer to as Special Olympics Unified Sports®. Unified Sports on second reference is fine. Always capitalize when referring to the program that brings together people with intellectual disabilities (athletes) and those without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition.



Unified

The U in Unified may be capitalized when used as an adjective, such as: John has been a Unified partner at his school for years; this is Sheila's first year as a Unified athlete. Keith coaches Unified floor hockey.

Unified Sports Experience

Formerly known as Unity Sports. These are exhibition games that team people with and without intellectual disabilities on the field of play. These games often involve celebrities. Unified Sports Experience events create an opportunity to spotlight the importance of friendship, sportsmanship and inclusion.

United States, U.S., USA

Spell out when used as a noun. Use U.S. only as an adjective. Use USA (no periods) after U.S. State Program names on first reference.

Examples: Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and the United States make up Special Olympics North America. Special Olympics Connecticut is a U.S. Program. Special Olympics Texas (USA) hosts its Fall Classic in October.

Vice President

Capitalize. Do not hyphenate.

Washington, D.C.

Include comma and periods.

website

One word, lowercase.

World Wide Web, the Web

Capitalize.

yearlong

One word. This is AP style. (But note the two usages below.)

year-end

Hyphenated for for both noun and adjective.

year-round

Young Athletes™

Athletes is plural. The Young Athletes program created to reach out to children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 to 7 and introduce them to the world of sport, with the goal of preparing them for Special Olympics training and competition. NOTE: Please do not abbreviate as YAP.



The Most Common Style Errors

(and how to avoid them)

WEB EDITION

Below is guidance on avoiding some of the more frequent style errors. These can be especially important when writing copy that will be posted on the Special Olympics website (www.specialolympics.org).

HEADLINES

- Please Capitalize All Main Words. This includes more than just proper nouns. This includes all verbs, even short ones such as Is and Are; pronouns and possessives such as Our and Its; and short, but important words, such as All.
- Headlines Need Verbs. A label is not a headline, as in “2013 World Games.” Among other things, the verb in the headline helps tell what the story’s about – and whether it’s really a story.

DATES

Use the Date-Month-Year construction, as in 16 January 2015. This is the way dates are written in most places around the world: no abbreviations and no commas. (This is Special Olympics global style, not AP style.)

PUNCTUATION

PERIODS

- Periods go inside quotation marks. “No exceptions.”
- Leave one space after a period. Not two.

COMMAS

- Commas are used in a complex series, as in: “encouraging relationships between Programs and schools, engaging youth with and without disabilities, and building communities.”
- Commas are not needed in a simple series, such as “pride, joy and empowerment.”
- Commas always go inside quotation marks. “This is how it should look,” she said. “Even if the comma is part of an incomplete sentence,” he added.
- Don’t use commas to separate a title that goes directly in front of a name. Yes: Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver cheered the athletes. Not: Special Olympics Chairman, Tim Shriver, cheered the athletes.



OTHER CAUTIONS

- Be consistent in how you refer to persons with disabilities and persons without disabilities. For example,
 - Do not call people with disabilities by their first name, unless that's how everyone else is referred to in an informal context or story.
 - Photo captions should identify everyone. Do not caption a photo: "Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Special Olympics athletes." Name everyone.
- Unified vs. Project UNIFY. Unified Sports brings together athletes with and without intellectual disabilities for training and competition. It should not be confused with Special Olympics Project UNIFY, the education-based program using sports and education initiatives to inspire and activate youth.
- The U in Unified may be capitalized when used as an adjective, such as: John has been a Unified athlete at his school for years. This is the first day of Unified volleyball training.
- Movement. The "m" is only uppercase when it follows Special Olympics, as in "The Special Olympics Movement." Please try to avoid referring to "the Movement."
- When writing a press release or other announcement that will "live" on our website for a while, avoid use of "today" when possible. Let the dateline (or the date on the web page) do that for you.

FINAL NOTE

We are a global organization. When mentioning Special Olympics events, activities or athletes on the website, please don't label these as SO North America or SO MENA or SO Latin America events or athletes, but rather simply as Special Olympics events or athletes. We are all part of one organization spanning seven regions. Our website should reflect this.