

# NCAA Division III and Special Olympics Partnership Talking Points

(updated July 13, 2015)



## Background

- The Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) initiated a partnership with Special Olympics at the 2011 NCAA Convention. The official launch of the partnership was August 1, 2011.
- The Division III SAAC identified Special Olympics because programs are offered in every state; it involves hands-on interaction and physical activities; events can be measured by volunteer hours or funds raised; and Special Olympics is an established nationally recognized organization.
- The community outreach effort will link hundreds of SAACs at Division III institutions and conference offices with local Special Olympics Programs in each state.

## Purpose

- The purpose of the partnership is to enhance the lives of Division III student-athletes and Special Olympics athletes through a mutual learning experience; provide a platform for recognition of Special Olympics athletes and Division III student-athletes within their communities; and raise awareness of Special Olympics, its programs and services.
- The partnership serves as another opportunity to demonstrate the *citizenship* and *comprehensive learning* attributes of Division III student-athletes. Student-athletes giving back to their local (and often national and international) communities not only adds to the comprehensive learning component of Division III, but also provides a venue for passion and service.

## Impact

- Since the launch of the partnership, 39 NCAA Division III conferences and 208 institutions have reported a Special Olympics activity. Of these reported activities, approximately 29,000 student-athletes and 68,000 Special Olympics athletes took part, dedicating approximately 300,000 total hours and raising over \$144,000 for local Special Olympics chapters.
- During 2014-15, Special Olympics events were conducted at 13 NCAA Division III championships in 12 states, with over 1,500 student-athletes and 228 Special Olympics athletes participating.

## Ideas For Special Olympics Events and Activities

- Host exhibition competitions for Special Olympics athletes
- Invite Special Olympics athletes as special guests or honorary captains at games and Championship banquets
- Facilitate clinics for Special Olympics athletes
- Host an NCAA student-athlete social with Special Olympics athletes
- Adopt a local Special Olympics team for a season
- Include Special Olympics athletes in ceremonial activities (coin toss, national anthem, etc.)
- Coordinate a bowling outing
- Volunteer at Special Olympics events as officials, coaches, etc.
- Develop a campus “Spread the Word to End the Word” campaign
- Contribute all proceeds from concession sales to Special Olympics

## **About Special Olympics**

Special Olympics is a global organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport, everyday around the world. The Special Olympics values are sportsmanship with joy, athlete leadership, unity, bravery and perseverance; and the oath is “Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

Through programming in sports, health, education and community building, Special Olympics as a catalyst to reveal the champion in all of us, and is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, tackling the injustice, isolation, intolerance and inactivity they face throughout the world. With 225 Accredited Programs in 180 countries, Special Olympics is providing opportunities for more than 4 million athletes, one million volunteers and millions more people including family members, supporters, and fans.

- Special Olympics has a vision of a world where people with Intellectual disabilities lead healthy, vibrant lives, grounded in ongoing sports and physical activity, sound nutrition and a deeply held conviction to improve, compete, achieve and demonstrate their personal best to themselves and their community.
- Special Olympics believes that every person with intellectual disabilities and their family should be empowered to preserve and understand what they need to do in order to optimize their health, and it positions people with intellectual disabilities as leaders in engendering and sustaining acceptance and respect within schools and communities. It is also where assessable information, resources, systems and policies exist at the individual, community, national and global levels that support them in realizing healthy productive lives.
- Special Olympics, through its relentless focus on benefitting people with intellectual disabilities through sports for social change, has generated awareness and catalyzed actions that result in more accepting, cohesive communities and stronger, more civil societies around the world.
- Special Olympics offers over 32 Olympic-type summer and winter sports and holds more than 53,000 competitions annually. That’s the equivalent of about 146 competitions a day.
- Benefits for all who participate in Special Olympics include dignity, pride, joy, justice, fitness, empowerment, friendship, acceptance and community.