

**Special Olympics Iowa  
Program Report  
July 18, 2016**

## **Summer Games**

Approximately 2,513 SOIA athletes and more than 1,200 participated in the 2016 Summer Games. Events included in volunteers made the state competition a huge success. Athletes competed in aquatics, athletics (track and field), bocce, cycling, team soccer or soccer skills, and tennis or tennis skills. Overall we saw a gain in the number of athletes over last year, with Athletics, Bocce and Tennis seeing slight gains and Cycling and Soccer seeing slight decreases.

### **2016 Summer Games Statistics**

# Athletes Registered = 2,513  
# Athletes Scratched = 194  
# Unified Partners = 78  
# Delegations = 280  
# Coaches = 86

### **2015 Summer Games Statistics**

# Athletes Registered = 2,394  
# Athletes Scratched = 321  
# Unified Partners = 56  
# Delegations = 289  
# Coaches = 84

### **Healthy Athletes – Summer Games**

Participation in our Summer Games Healthy Athletes program increased this year from approximately 930 to 1,115. Much of this growth is attributable to an innovative but simple incentive program that rewards athletes with a t-shirt from a past event if they participate in a designated number of disciplines. Not only did we increase participation, we also found a very worthwhile use for those extra t-shirts we always seem to have after each event.

## **Softball Skills and Team Softball**

Preparation is underway for the upcoming softball competitions and tournaments. Approximately 500 athletes will participate in either skills or conference tournaments around the state in July. The State Softball Tournament will be held on August 6 in Ankeny.

## **Play Days, Challenge Days and Unified Days**

Des Moines Play Day – 108 Athletes (86 in 2015)  
Cedar Rapids Play Day – 111 Athletes  
Ankeny Play Day – 492 Athletes (426 IN 2015)  
River Hills Spring Play Day – 49 Athletes  
Des Moines Challenge Day – 56 Athletes  
Cedar Falls Challenge Day – 46 Athletes  
Carroll New Hope Village Challenge Day - 47 Athletes  
Drake Unified Day – 538 Athletes and Partners (552 in 2015)

## **Golf Skills Training Clinics**

Golf Pro Sarah Bidney is once again offering free athlete golf training at the Wakonda Country Club in Des Moines this summer. Athletes receive one-on-one instruction from one of the best golf pros in Iowa. In person coach training clinics continue to be held throughout the state providing sport certification opportunities for the volunteer coaches.

## Area Directors Meeting

Our annual Area Directors Meeting was held on June 4, 2016 led by our three regional directors, Erin Birkenholtz, Katie Rasmussen and Bruce Wilson. In advance of the meeting, the 11 Area Directors were asked to provide input on areas of concern or discussion items, especially those relating to inconsistencies of regional and state competitions. One of the primary areas of focus was to try make the athlete experience more consistent from local and regional competitions to state level competitions. Here are some key discussion items from that meeting, along with our action plans.

**Weather Policy** – The need for area directors/event managers to have some guidance on when to cancel or postpone an event due to inclement weather. We contacted the Iowa High School Athletic Association to see if they had or knew of someone who had a policy – they do not. For now, the **recommendation** is as follows:

Events will be cancelled due to inclement weather at the discretion of the area director or event manager, who may involve the state office or other applicable resources in making the final decision.

**Honest Effort Rule** – This rule states that athletes are to participate honestly and with maximum effort in all events and disqualifies athletes who fail to do so. The threshold is an increase in performance of 20% or more. The **recommendation** is to add this language to the Coaches' Guide: "Generally the Honest Effort Rule will be followed. However, occasionally circumstances warrant exceptions as determined by the Area Director or Event Manager."

**Competition Rosters** – There is considerable confusion regarding our official policy on rosters, state participation for athletes who scratched at their area competition, roster substitutions and how to address situations when athletes are late for a competition or show up the wrong day. The recommendation from the Area Directors are as follows, however, there is need for further discussion among the program staff to fully consider the consequences of the policies.

**Roster Scratches for Team Competitions** – If the athlete is on the original roster at area/conference level and the athlete has practiced then they can participate at the state level.

**Missed or Late For Competition** – If possible, we will allow the athlete to still participate in some way. The athlete will be awarded a participation ribbon.

**Rosters and Substitutions** – Much of our policy regarding roster substitutions is unwritten or not as clear as it could be. The recommendation is to clarify or add the following points to the Coaches' Guide.

**Filling Out Rosters Completely** – It is important to list the maximum number of athletes allowed for each competition. For example, on the 3 on 3 basketball form, there are five spaces available for athlete names. If all fill spaces are filled in, there is less of a chance that an entire team would have to scratch due to the loss of one or two athletes.

**Substitutions on a Relay or Bocce Team** – Substitutions can be made on an Aquatics or Athletics relay team or Bocce team on the day of the event as long as the new athlete has qualified for the event in the same category. Up to two substitutions per team can be made. Bowling substitutions cannot be allowed to score handicapping.

**Athletics** – The two main areas of inconsistency we discussed are 1). The use of a starting gun and, 2). When to use staggered starts verses waterfall starts.

**Starting Gun** – The sudden and loud noise of a gunshot can be a problem for some of our athletes. The recommendation is to allow areas to determine the use or nonuse at local events and to always use it at state events. Moreover, the state should use an indoor gun or indoor blanks, which are less problematic.

## Area Directors Meeting (continued)

**Staggered v. Waterfall Starts** – We will clarify the language in the rules.

**Bowling** – The main issue discussed was how to handle bowlers who show up late for competition. The recommendation is to add this to the Coaches' Guide

Once games begin, if the bowler is not present for their first game they will receive a score of 0. They will be allowed to bowl their second game if present and on time for the start of that game. The same is true for team competition – if one or more team members are not present for their first game the team will receive a score of 0 for the game, but will be allowed to bowl their second game if present and on time for the start of that game.

## Class A Credentials/Background Checks

Class A Credentials/Background checks from January to June 2016 are at 1,018, so we're ahead of pace compared to last year. On an average, we've had a monthly increase of 40 credentials processed since 2014 and 75 credentials processed since 2013.

## YTD Program Event Participation Numbers

Sport	Male			Female			Totals		
	2015	2016	Gain/(Loss)	2015	2016	Gain/(Loss)	2015	2016	Gain/(Loss)
Alpine Skiing	44	41	(3)	16	21	5	60	62	2
Aquatics									
Athletics									
Basketball	970	1,043	73	469	540	71	1,439	1,583	144
Bocce	222	208	(14)	170	203	33	392	411	19
Bowling			-			-	-	-	-
Cross Country	34	36	2	31	32	1	65	68	3
Cycling	208	184	(24)	105	110	5	313	294	(19)
Dance	37	39	2	216	229	13	253	268	15
Equestrian			-			-	-	-	-
Figure Skating	1	1	-	2	2	-	3	3	-
Flag Football			-			-	-	-	-
Football (Soccer)	179	164	(15)	74	81	7	253	245	(8)
Golf			-			-	-	-	-
Gymnastics,	-	-	-	3	4	1	3	4	1
Gymnastics,			-			-	-	-	-
MATP			-			-	-	-	-
Power Lifting	61	63	2	6	10	4	67	73	6
Roller Skating			-			-	-	-	-
Short Track Speed	20	19	(1)	9	6	(3)	29	25	(4)
Snowshoeing	82	80	(2)	75	51	(24)	157	131	(26)
Softball			-			-	-	-	-
Tennis	33	49	16	44	36	(8)	77	85	8
Volleyball			-			-	-	-	-
Young Athletes			-			-	-	-	-
<b>Total Participation</b>	<b>1,891</b>	<b>1,927</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>3,111</b>	<b>3,252</b>	<b>141</b>

Note: Aquatics and Athletics numbers are currently being compiled and will updated when available.

## Upcoming 2016 State Competition and Program Event Dates

Softball Skills Competition	July 8	Manning
Conference Softball Tournaments	July 9	Des Moines/CR/Ames
Softball Skills Competition	July 16	Muscatine
State Softball Tournament	August 6	Ankeny Prairie Ridge
Council Bluffs Challenge Day	August 11	Iowa Western Comm. College
Vinton Unified Mini Golf Tournament	August 13	Vinton
Spencer Unified Golf	August 14	Spencer
Cedar Rapids Unified Golf	August 27	Cedar Rapids – Twin Pines
Akron Unified Golf	September 10	Akron
Muscatine Unified Golf	September 14	Muscatine
State Equestrian Meet	September 17	Jester Park Equestrian Center
Davenport Unified Golf	September 21	Davenport – Red Hawk
Jester Park Unified Golf	September 24	Granger – Jester Park
Sioux City Play Day	September 28	Sioux City
State Volleyball Tournament	October 8	Iowa State University
BVU Unified Day	October 13	Buena Vista University
Ruby Van Meter/Smouse Medfest	October 14	Ruby Van Meter/Smouse
State Flag Football Tournament	October 15	Cedar Rapids
Council Bluffs Play Day	November 4	Council Bluffs Jefferson HS
Davenport Play Day	November 9	Davenport West YMCA
Muscatine Play Day	November 10	Muscatine YMCA
Bowling	November 19	Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and Sioux City