



2026 WINTER

Season Information & Coach Packet



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Training Season

Sports offered for the winter season include alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing. Athletes must attain **6 weeks or 8 hours** of training in their sport to compete at Area Games. Athletes must attain **8 weeks or 12 hours** of training in their sport to compete at State Winter Games.

We recommend beginning training by the beginning of December. If there is not enough snow for your sport at that time, we recommend starting with dry-land training to begin strengthening the proper muscles for that sport and to build endurance. If you begin training close to area games, two trainings a week or longer trainings will be required to fit the minimum amount of training in. Area games count toward training requirements for state games.

Please ensure that all members of your team are up to date on paperwork for their training and competition season. Reach out to your Area Director for an updated report of your team.

Paperwork Requirements:

- Athletes require: [Athlete Registration \(consent\)](#), [Athlete Medical](#), and [Communicable Disease Waiver](#)
- Unified partners require: [Class A Volunteer Form](#) and [Communicable Disease Waiver](#)
- Coaches require: [Class A Volunteer Form](#), [Protective Behaviors Training](#), [Concussion Training](#), and [Communicable Disease Waiver](#)

*Starting January 1, 2026, SOWY will be changing to new athlete paperwork. Be on the lookout for more information on this transition coming soon. *

All athletes are expected to adhere to the [Athlete Code of Conduct](#).

All coaches are expected to adhere to the [Coaches Code of Conduct](#).

Sport-Specific Information

All Sports:

Maximum effort/honest effort rule: Athletes are expected to give maximum effort when competing. This is the only way the divisioning process can work as it was intended. Athletes who do not participate honestly and with maximum effort in all preliminary trials and/or finals violate the true spirit of competition. Anyone who improves their final score by 15% or more from their qualifying score may be disqualified.

Rules: Each sport for our winter season will follow the most updated Special Olympics rulebook for each sport (2024). Please make sure your program/team is using these updated rules. Rules can be found on our website here: <https://sowy.org/sports/sports-offered>.

Protest form: If a coach has a dispute against a violation of rules at any competition, they must fill out a protest form immediately following the event in which they want to protest, and before awards happen for that event. Protest forms are located with the venue director or at the main check-in/awards table. Protest forms must relate to a violation of rules, and the coach must be able to prove which rule the infraction violated in the most updated sport rulebook.

Divisioning: Athletes will be separated into divisions at area and state games to provide the fairest competition experience. Divisions will prioritize qualifying score, then age, then gender.

Cold weather considerations: SOWY uses guidance from the Wyoming High School Activities Association regarding cold weather precautions and delays/cancellations for Area and State Games.

“If the temperature level is forecast to be between minus 15 [5°F] and minus 25 C [-13°F] at any point on the course, recommendations regarding cold weather protection should be made available to the participants... If the temperature in a major portion of the course is minus 25 C [-13°F] or below, the competition shall be delayed or cancelled.”

Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding:

- Athletes may compete in 1 sport, and up to 3 events.
- Athletes must compete at the same level for all events.
- Due to the differences between every ski hill, athletes will complete one divisioning run of a modified Giant Slalom at both area and state games. This will place them in the proper division for competition that day.

Events (all events are offered as either traditional or Unified):

	Alpine Ski	Snowboard
Beginning/Lower Ability Events (ran on bunny hill) Levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginner Assisted (<i>coach on the course</i>) • Beginner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Meter Walk • Glide • Super Glide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Meter Skate • Glide • Super Glide
Novice, Intermediate, & Advanced Events (ran on main hill) Levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novice Assisted (<i>coach on the course</i>) • Novice • Intermediate • Advanced (<i>may be run on harder hill</i>) • Sit Ski 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slalom (best of 2 runs) • Super G (1 run) • Giant Slalom (best of 2 runs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slalom (best of 2 runs) • Super G (1 run) • Giant Slalom (best of 2 runs)

Unified Option:

- All events are offered as either traditional or Unified. Athletes may still only choose 3 events and may not compete in the same event in both traditional and Unified.
- Unified events consist of one athlete and one Unified partner. Each gets the appropriate amount of runs per event (events with 2 runs keep better score). One score from each team member is added together to get team score.

Additional Notes:

- Slalom and Giant Slalom allow 2 runs with the better score kept. Super G allows 1 run.
- All competitors and forerunners must wear a crash helmet for official training as well as for the race that meets the most updated FIS Equipment Specifications.
- Level Differentiation:
 - Novice: can perform controlled linked turns on an easy hill. Can ski the easiest terrain on the mountain in control.
 - Intermediate: can perform Christie-type linked turns (skidded turns) on an intermediate hill.
 - Advanced: can perform controlled open parallel turns on an advanced hill.

Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoe:

- Athletes may compete in 1 sport, and up to 3 individual events plus 1 relay (4 events total).
- Athletes must enter into consecutive distance events: 25m→50m→100m, 100m→500m→1k, etc.

Events:

	Cross Country Ski	Snowshoe
Shorter Distance Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 Meter Assisted Ski Race• 10 Meter Ski Race• 25 Meter Assisted Ski Race• 25 Meter Ski Race• 50 Meter Ski Race• 100 Meter Ski Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 Meter Assisted Race• 25 Meter Race• 50 Meter Assisted Race• 50 Meter Race• 100 Meter Assisted Race• 100 Meter Race
Longer Distance Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 500 Meter Ski Race• 1 Kilometer Ski Race• 2.5 Kilometer Ski Race• 5 Kilometer Ski Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 200 Meter Race• 400 Meter Race• 800 Meter Race• 1600 Meter Race
Relay Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 x 1 Kilometer Relay• 4 x 1 Kilometer Unified Sports Relay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 x 100 Meter Relay• 4 x 100 Meter Unified Sports Relay• 4 x 400 Meter Relay• 4 x 400 Meter Unified Sports Relay

Unified Option:

- Unified relays must consist of 2 athletes and 2 Unified partners.
- Athletes may not compete on more than 1 relay team.
- Unified partners may compete in two Unified relay races of different distances. They may not compete on two teams for the same race distance.

Additional Notes:

- Cross country ski athletes will complete a time trial at area and state games before official competition. This will place them in the appropriate divisions for the day.
 - Short distances (10m, 25m, 50m) will complete a 25m Time Trial.
 - Medium distances (100m and 500m) will complete a 100m Time Trial.
 - Long distances (1k, 2.5k, 5k) will complete a 1k Time Trial.
 - If athletes are competing in mixed distances (ex. 50m (short), 100m (medium) and 500m (medium)) they will complete multiple time trials.
- Snowshoe athletes will complete a time trial at area and state games before official competition. This will place them in the appropriate divisions for the day.
 - Short distances (25m, 50m, 100m) will complete a 50m Time Trial.
 - Long distances (200m, 400m, 800m, 1600m) will complete a 200m Time Trial.
 - If athletes are competing in mixed distances (ex. 50m (short), 100m (short) and 200m (long)) they will complete multiple time trials.

Area Games

Athletes and Unified partners must compete at area games to compete at state games. Athletes and Unified partners may compete in one sport only.

The events that athletes compete in at Area Games will be the same events they compete in at State Games. No changes will be allowed.

List of Area Games and Area Directors:

Area	Location	Date	Area Director	Contact Information
Area 1	Antelope Butte (Shell)	2/6	Katy Brittain	(307) 899-2638 area1@specialolympicswy.org
Area 2	White Pine (Pinedale)	2/6	Kirklin Carroll-Vincent	(307) 871-1525 area2@specialolympicswy.org
Area 3	Laramie	2/11	Marsha Dial	(307) 220-0253 area3@specialolympicswy.org
Area 4	Terry Peak (Deadwood, SD)	2/12	Carrie Pilcher	(307) 751-0539 areaiv@specialolympicswy.org
Area 5	Hogadon & Skunk Hollow (Casper)	2/1	Christine Dice	(307) 277-5690 area5@specialolympicswy.org

**Dates and locations subject to change by Area Director pending availability and weather*

Area Games registration will be sent out by your Area Director. It is imperative that you turn in registration to your Area Director by their deadline so that they have the proper time to enter all participants, division, and send you delegation reports to check that everything is accurate. Area Directors reserve the right to not accept late registrations.

You must include qualifying times from practice on your area games registration.

State Games

Location	Dates	Contact	Contact Information
Jackson	February 24-26, 2026	Amber Bliss	(307) 235-3062 abliss@specialolympicswy.org

Special Olympics Wyoming anticipates over 300 athletes, Unified partners, coaches, and volunteers to come together for the 2026 State Winter Games!

Registration:

State Games registration will be sent out by the state office and will be due to Amber Bliss at abliss@specialolympicswy.org by EOD **Monday, February 9**. It is imperative that you turn in registration by the deadline so that we have the proper time to enter all participants, division, and send you delegation reports to check. We reserve the right to not accept late registrations. Registration is also available [on the SOWY website](#).

Special Events:

- Torch Run: the Law Enforcement Torch Run is planning a Torch Run on Tuesday, 2/24. More information will be coming soon!
- Opening Ceremony: Tuesday, 2/24 at 7:15pm.
- Victory Banquet and Dance: Wednesday, 2/25 at 6:00pm. Theme: Winter Wonderland

Meals:

Special Olympics Wyoming will provide:

- Dinner on Tuesday 2/24
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner on Wednesday 2/25
- Breakfast and lunch on Thursday 2/26

If you or your athletes have specific dietary needs or do not like meals choices, please make arrangements to bring your own lunch or dinner. SOWY will not reimburse you if you choose not to eat one of our prearranged meals and go off site for food.

It is important that local/team coordinators provide an accurate number of meals on their registration form.

Lodging:

We are proud to partner with three host hotels for the 2026 State Winter Games. Please try to book at these hotels before looking for other housing. Snow King is no longer a host hotel.

- Mountain Modern: \$159 per room/per night. Call Mountain Modern directly at 307-733-4340 ext. 1 and mention the Special Olympics Wyoming room block and stay dates (2/24 and 2/25). You can also book online using this link <https://reservations.travelclick.com/102165?groupID=5000461>
- Parkway Inn of Jackson Hole: \$149 per room/per night. Call Parkway Inn directly at 307-733-3143 and mention Special Olympics Wyoming. Reservations must be made at least 45 days prior to stay (space permitting).
- Super 8: \$124 per room/per night. Call Super 8 directly at 307-733-6833 and mention Special Olympics Wyoming. Reservations must be made by 1/24/2026 (space permitting).

*A valid credit card will be required at the time of booking to guarantee reservations, and guests will be responsible for incidental charges. Charges for lodging at host hotels will be billed to Special Olympics Wyoming and will not be the responsibility of the guest.

Recreational Swimming Guidelines:

Special Olympics Wyoming prohibits recreational swimming at any time while under the auspices of Special Olympics. All members of Special Olympics Wyoming teams are **not** allowed to swim or use hot tubs at hotels while attending Special Olympics Wyoming events. [Full policy here.](#)

Housing Arrangements:

Athletes, Unified partners, coaches, and chaperones (participants) are on a one person per bed basis. Arrangements cannot be made that will ask two people to share a bed. Housing male and female participants together is not permitted. The only exception to this rule is a married couple.