

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ONTARIO

7000-307 Provincial Games: Team Eligibility for Participation in Provincial Games

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 2026

REVIEW DATE: September 2026

Basketball, Bocce, Curling, Softball, Soccer, Floorball and Floor Hockey Teams must meet all eligibility requirements outlined in the policy detailed below to be eligible to participate in a Provincial Games. In addition to meeting these team requirements each athlete on that team must also adhere to the 'Athlete Eligibility' requirements as per Policy 7000-305.

Provincial Games Eligibility Requirements:**Athlete Registration**

Each athlete must submit a completed Special Olympics Ontario athlete registration form.

Age

All athletes must be 10 years of age or older as of the first day of Provincial Games.

Sports Club Registration

Each athlete on the team must be registered to their respective sport club within the Membership Portal and actively participating with the program the year prior to the Provincial Qualifier.

Attendance records may be requested.

Each team must be registered as a sport club within the Membership Portal by the Provincial Games Eligibility Deadline which is January 1st for winter sports, by February 1st for spring sports and July 1st for summer sports in Year 1 of the 2 Year Eligibility Cycle.

Provincial Qualifier

Each team must participate in their assigned Provincial Qualifier. The athletes appearing on a Team Roster must have participated on the same team at the Provincial Qualifier (exception, please see Player Pickup on page 2).

Athletes can only be registered and play on one team roster within the Provincial Qualifier. Teams that use players who have played on another team within the Provincial Qualifier will be considered ineligible to advance to Provincial Games.

An injured player, with supporting documentation, may be included on the team roster for Provincial Qualifiers. Once medically cleared, these athletes can re-join the team outside of the designated pick-up policy. Injury documentation must be submitted to Special Olympics Ontario within 30 days of the Provincial Qualifier. Teams must still adhere to the maximum roster size for the sport as indicated in the chart below.

Training Time

To be eligible for Provincial Qualifiers and Provincial Games, all teams must have trained within their sport for a minimum of 30 hours and three (3) months during each of the two seasons during the Two-Year Eligibility Cycle.

For more information on the Two-Year Eligibility Cycle please refer to policy 7000-212.

Coach Certifications

Teams whose coaches do not meet the minimum coach certifications for Provincial Games may be ineligible to advance to Provincial Games as outlined in Provincial Games Coach Selection Criteria Policy 7000-308.

Coach: Athlete Ratios

All teams must meet the minimum Coach:Athlete Ratio to attend the Provincial Qualifier.

Coach Assignment on Team Rosters at Provincial Qualifiers

Each coach may only be assigned to one team within the Provincial Qualifier. The team roster must clearly indicate the coaches assigned to that team. See Provincial Games Coach Selection Policy 7000-308.

Eligibility Lists

Immediately following the Two-Year Eligibility season a document identifying all athletes registered in that sport within each District will be distributed to the Program Consultant. Athletes' names must appear on this list to be eligible to advance and participate in the Provincial Games.

Athletes whose names do not appear on the eligibility list are prohibited from participating in Provincial Games. Community Council representatives and club coaches are directed to consult the Athlete Eligibility lists during the Athlete Endorsement Process to confirm that athletes are eligible prior to informing athletes that they will be attending the Provincial Games.

To assist club coaches in ensuring that all team members are eligible to participate in Provincial Games, it is suggested that coaches register all potential athletes in their program (club) by the Provincial Games Eligibility Deadline, regardless of ability level, as no maximum number applies to initial team registration. The purpose of registering the club is to identify potential participants for inclusion in a Provincial Games.

A coach or administrative volunteer who informs an athlete that he/she will be attending a Provincial Games prior to consulting the Athlete Eligibility list will assume responsibility for that action.

Exemption Process

Communities may apply for an exemption in cases where their sanctioned Provincial Qualifying competitions are cancelled, in whole or in part, for reasons beyond anyone's control (i.e. inclement weather, transportation issues, epidemics and acts of God). In these cases, Communities must apply, in writing to the Manager, Sport and Competitions no later than seven days following the cancellation of the qualifying competition event in question. The exemption request should describe the circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the qualifying competition.

The Program Services Team will review the exemption request and render a decision. If the exemption is granted, athletes will be eligible to compete in all events they were registered to compete in at the cancelled Provincial qualifying competition.

Athletes with Down Syndrome

Athletes who have Down Syndrome and have not had an x-ray or neurological examination for Atlanto Axial Instability are ineligible from participating in the sports/events of: butterfly stroke and diving starts in swimming, pentathlon, high jump, powerlifting, basketball, soccer, and alpine skiing. Those athletes who have tested positive in the above examinations are also ineligible in the preceding sports/events, unless the examining physician has notified the athlete's parents or guardians of the nature and extent of the individual's condition and, such athlete shall be allowed to participate in the activities listed only if the athlete submits written certification from two physicians combined with an acknowledgement of risks and signed by the adult athlete or his/her parent or guardian if the athlete is a *minor*.

Team Roster

The team roster must adhere to the minimum and maximum number of players allowed by each sport.

Sport	Min Roster	Max Roster
Basketball	8	10
Curling	4	5
Floorball	8	10
Floor Hockey	11	16
Soccer	9	12
Softball	12	15

No additional players shall be permitted to the Team Roster, except for pick-up players

Teams, who arrive at a Provincial Qualifier or Provincial Games with either:

1. less than minimum number of players
2. arrive with the minimum number of players yet drop below the minimum number of players for the duration of the tournament due to behavioural issues

would not qualify for awards or placement points so therefore are ineligible to advance to a higher level of competition. All matches played against or scheduled against this team shall be considered void and will result in no point acquisition for any team. Exhibition games may be set up for the team at the discretion of the organizing committee.

Teams who arrive at a Provincial Qualifier or Provincial Games with an eligible roster and fall below the minimum roster size during competition due to documented player injuries, but still have an eligible line-up within the designated sport rules, will remain eligible for competition.

Player Pick-up Policy

An injured player, with supporting documentation, may be included on the team roster for Provincial Qualifiers or Provincial Games. Once medically cleared, these athletes can re-join the team outside of the designated pick-up policy. Injury documentation must be submitted to Special Olympics Ontario within 30 days of the Provincial Qualifier. Teams must still adhere to the maximum roster size for the sport as indicated in the chart above.

If a team roster competes with, or falls below, the maximum number, due to illness, injury or extenuating circumstances, after the final team roster has been submitted, teams will be permitted to pick up a maximum of two (2) additional players (curling) or 3 additional players (basketball, floorball, floor hockey, soccer and softball) to their roster for Provincial Qualifiers or Provincial Games.

Team rosters falling below the minimum roster size, must utilize pick-up players to meet the minimum roster requirement. If the roster size after pick-up player allocation remains below the minimum roster size for that sport, the team will be deemed no longer eligible for participation.

Case Examples:

- 1. Soccer Team presents with 9 players (meets the minimum roster size), may pick-up 2 players to end up with less than the maximum roster size (11 players)*
- 2. Soccer Team presents with 11 players (meets the minimum roster size), may pick-up 1 player to the maximum roster size (12 players)*
- 3. Soccer Team presents with 11 players but falls to 8 through the identification process (does not meet the minimum roster size of 9), may pick-up 3 players to create a roster of 11 players (under the maximum roster size of 12).*
- 4. Soccer Team presents with 9 players but falls to 5 through the identification process (does not meet the minimum roster size of 9), if the team picks up 3 players the new roster size is 8 (which does not meet the minimum roster size of 9). The team is therefore ineligible for competition.*

In the spirit of fair play and to ensure a positive Games experience for all team members, all players (including pick-up players) must receive equitable playing time.

Order of Priority for Player Pickup – Provincial Qualifier

1. An athlete from your own community, who is registered with the program by the earlier of the sport specific registration date (January 1st – Winter Sports, February 1st – Spring Sports, July 1st – Summer Sports) or your designated PQ date.
2. An athlete from an outside community, who is registered within the designated sport by the sport specific registration date, but not included on Provincial Qualifiers roster for their home community.
 - a. This could be due to their home community choosing not to attend the Provincial Qualifier, or athletes impacted by roster restrictions within their home program.

Order of Priority for Player-Pickup – Provincial Games

1. An athlete from your own community, who is registered with the program by the earlier of the sport specific registration date (January 1st – Winter Sports, February 1st – Spring Sports, July 1st – Summer Sports) who was registered with the respective sport program for Year 1 and, either:
 - a. Attended the Provincial Qualifier in the respective sport on a different roster
 - b. Did not attend the Provincial Qualifier due to significant life events (wedding, pre-booked and non-refundable vacation, mandatory work training etc.)
 - i. Requests for pick-up consideration for athletes who did not attend the Provincial Qualifier must meet the following requirements
 1. Meet the eligibility requirements of Year One of the Two Year Eligibility Cycle
 2. Exemption request submitted prior to the Provincial Qualifier

If Option 1 is not available, please proceed to #2

1. If the community has no other eligible players available, that team can pick-up players from another team within their conference and those players must have participated in a Provincial Qualifier in that sport.

These additional 'pick up' team members must also meet the Athlete Eligibility criteria outlined in Policy 7000-305.

Athletes identified for pick up by a team must be of equal ability to the team and must reside within a close proximity to the team.

Final Approval of Pick Up Players

Special Olympics Ontario reserves the right to approve the athletes identified for pick up by a team.

Coaches must submit the list of identified players for pick up to SOO before proceeding with the endorsement process.

If a team requires more than two (2) additional players (curling) or three (3) additional players (all other team sports) to meet the minimum player number, the team will be ineligible to participate in the Provincial Games.

If a team falls below the minimum roster size, after using the player pick up policy, due to illness, injury or extenuating circumstances, the team will be ineligible to participate in the Provincial Games.

Games Registration Fees for Pick Up Players

The team/community requiring the pick up of the players will be responsible for all games registration fees and uniform costs for the pick up players. These players should be considered the same as any other member of the team/community.