Special Olympics Ontario

More Ways to Play



Agenda

- Introduction
- Competition Structure
- Partnership Opportunities
- Classification Structure
- Adaptive Programming
- Roundtable



How do Athletes Engage with Sport?



More Ways to Play - Introduction

What does “More Ways to Play” mean in sports?
“More Ways to Play” means creating more opportunities for Special Olympics athletes to participate in sport in ways that suit their interests, abilities, goals, and level of experience.

In the context of Special Olympics Ontario, this means expanding access to sport beyond traditional competitive and recreational sport programs so that athletes can find meaningful, inclusive, and affordable ways to be physically active, develop skills, build friendships, and enjoy the benefits of sport.

The focus is to make sport more accessible and flexible, recognizing that athletes may have different needs, schedules, interests, and ambitions.



More Ways to Play

The biggest opportunity is to think beyond simply adding more sports. “More Ways to Play” can mean creating entirely new ways to access sport, new partnerships, flexible participation options, and new reasons for people to stay involved with Special Olympics throughout their lives.

Special Olympics Ontario already has a great foundation to build upon already, which connects athletes with community sport programs. Unified Champion Schools programming combines inclusive sport, youth leadership, and whole-school engagement.



More Ways to Play - Introduction

Mission

Special Olympics Ontario is dedicated to enriching the lives of Ontarians with an intellectual disability through sport.

Vision

Our vision is that sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual disabilities and create inclusive communities across Ontario.



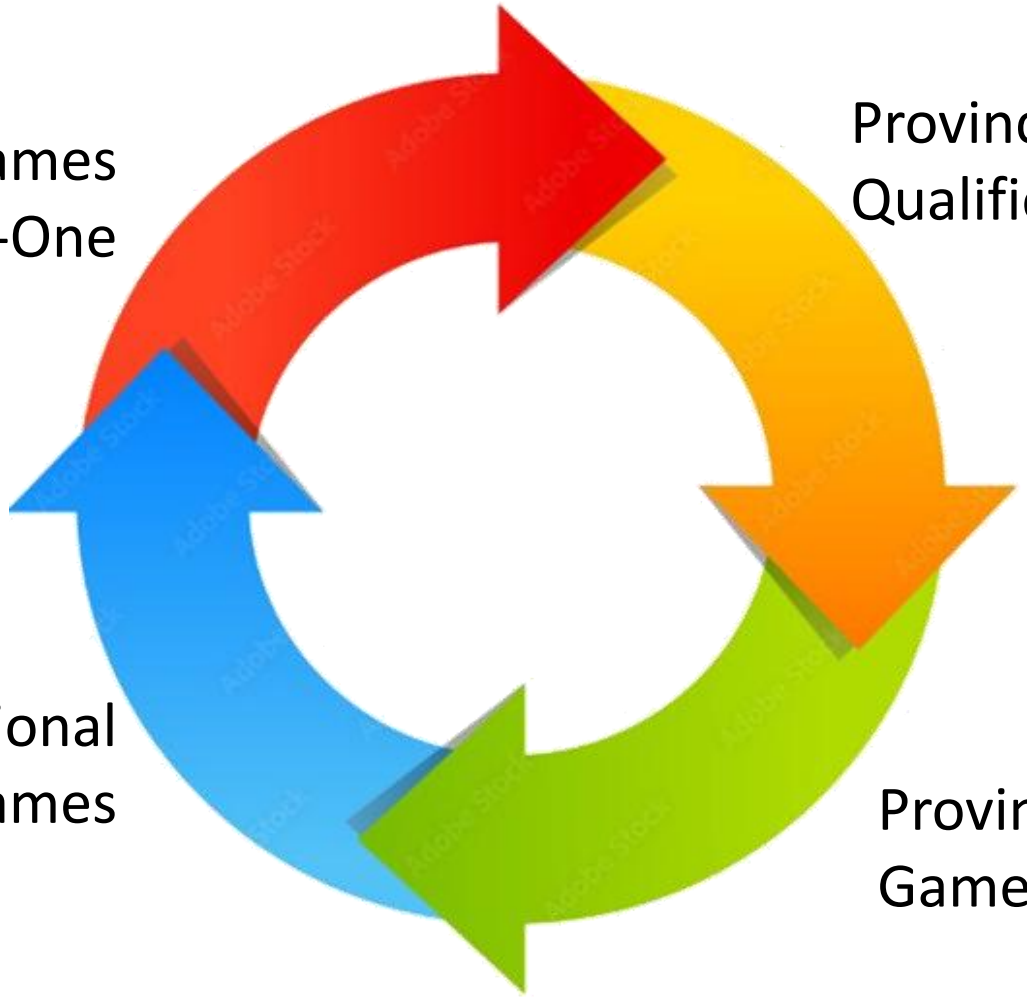


Competition Structure

Competition Structure

World Games
2YE Year-One

Provincial
Qualifiers



National
Games

Provincial
Games



More Ways to Play - Introduction

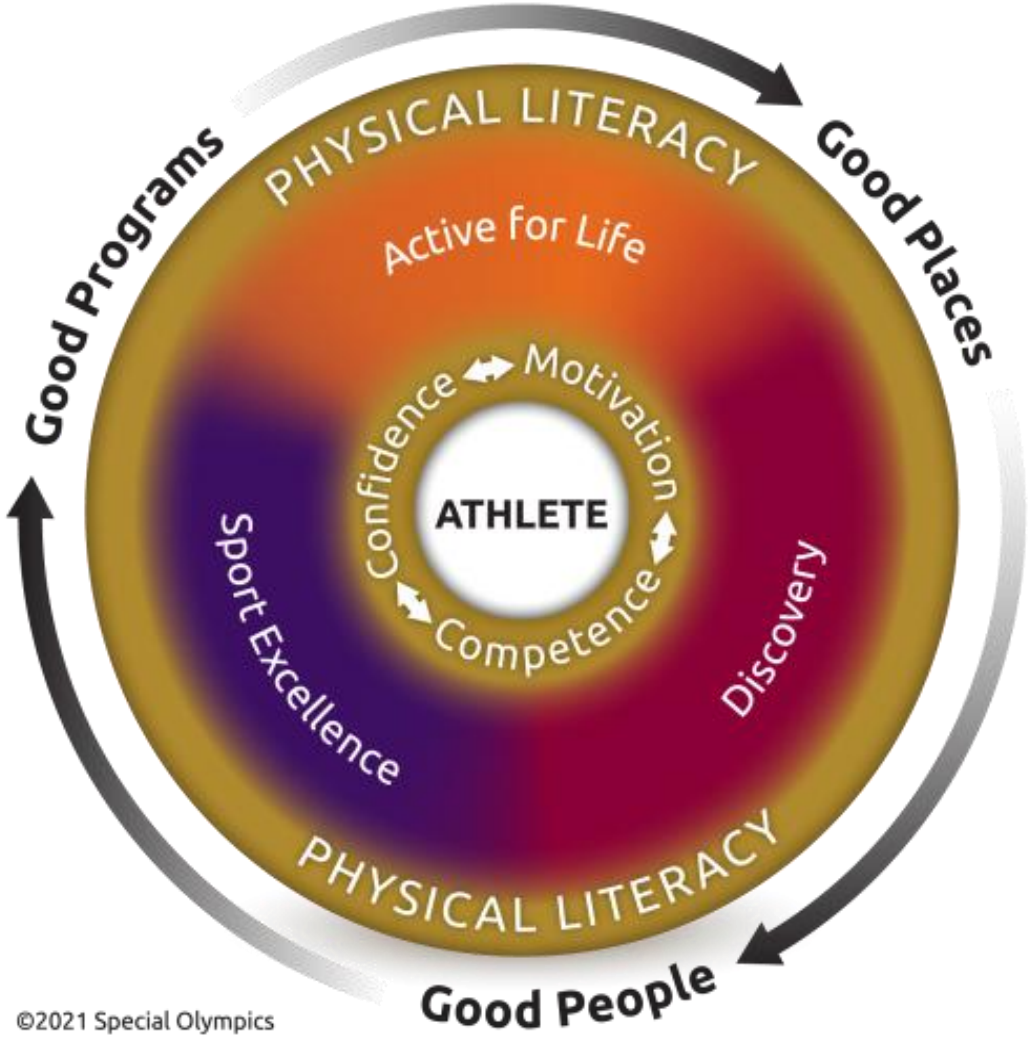
- SOO Athletes: ~20000

- SOO Provincial Qualifiers (2026 numbers): 1796
- SOO Provincial Qualifiers (2024 numbers): 2277

- SOO Provincial Games (2027): 766
- SOO Provincial Games (2025): 745

- SOO National Games (2026): 340
- SOO National Games (2024): 233

More Ways to Play - Introduction



©2021 Special Olympics

Partner Programs



Partner Opportunities

- Partner Opportunities
  - Local Sports Clubs
    - e.g. Oakville Soccer Club
  - Recreation Centers
    - e.g. Variety Village
    - e.g. Gretzky Pickleball Club
  - Provincial Sport Organizations
  - Inclusive Sport Organizations



Community Highlights

Little Kickers

CANOE KAYAK ONTARIO SPRINT



S.W.A.M.
Swimming With a Mission
Canada

HOPE HAVEN

ONTARIO SPECIAL OLYMPICS KAYAK PROGRAMS

Location	Canoe Club	Website
Richmond Hill	Richmond Hill Canoe Club	https://rhcc.on.ca/
Peterborough	Peterborough Canoe & Kayak Club	https://pckc.ca/
Carleton Place	Carleton Place Canoe Club	https://cpcanoeclub.com/
Oakville	Burloak Canoe Club	https://www.burloakcanoeclub.com/
Petrie Island	Petrie Island Canoe Club	https://petriecanoe.ca/
Kanata	Ottawa River Canoe Club	http://www.ottawarivercanoe.com/
Ottawa	Rideau Canoe Club	https://www.rideaucanoeclub.ca/
Cobourg	Cobourg Dragon Boat Canoe Club	http://cobourgdbcc.ca/
Pickering	Pickering Rouge Canoe Club	http://pickeringrouge.ca/
Toronto	Balmy Beach Canoe Club	https://www.balmybeachcanoe.com/
Niagara	South Niagara Canoe Club	https://sncc.ca/

Community Highlights



Classification Policy

- 3 types of Sport Classification
  - Official Sports
    - Those with a dedicated competition pathway through to SOC National Games and/or SOI World Games
    - 19 Official Sports
  - Recognized Sports
    - Sports that have official pathways through SONA or SOI
      - Rulesets
      - Coach Development
      - May be targeted by SOO for ongoing support development
  - Sanctioned Sports
    - Locally popular sports that meet safety and SOO mission criteria
    - May have additional requirements to ensure meaningful participation/financial stability.
    - May have additional risk or safety concerns.
    - Do not have an official ruleset through Special Olympics
    - Must receive official approval from SOO to be initiated within a community

Recognizing Community Success

- Pickleball (Recognized)
  - Driver of community growth and new volunteers
  - 20+ communities are now offering the sport
- Cornhole (Recognized)
  - Developed as an Active for Life sport with low barriers to entry
  - Huronia, LWSO, Sarnia, Tillsonburg, Toronto
- Disc Golf (Sanctioned)
  - Outdoor social activity with low cost to entry and great partnership potential
  - Mississauga, Toronto
- Cheer (Recognized*)
  - Partner development sport with the PSO
  - Aurora, Brantford, Thunder Bay
- Recognized: Badminton, Canoe/Kayak Equestrian, Volleyball
- Sanctioned: Cycling, Lawn Bowling, Ultimate Frisbee



Recognizing Community Success

- Fitness Programs
  - Fantastic ways to create fun, engaging activities for athletes of all abilities
  - London
    - BeatActive
  - Oakville & Sarnia
    - Dance Fit
  - Owen Sound
    - Fun Fit
  - Sault Ste. Marie
    - Walking Club
  - Sarnia & Toronto
    - Yoga
- Considered Sanctioned Programs



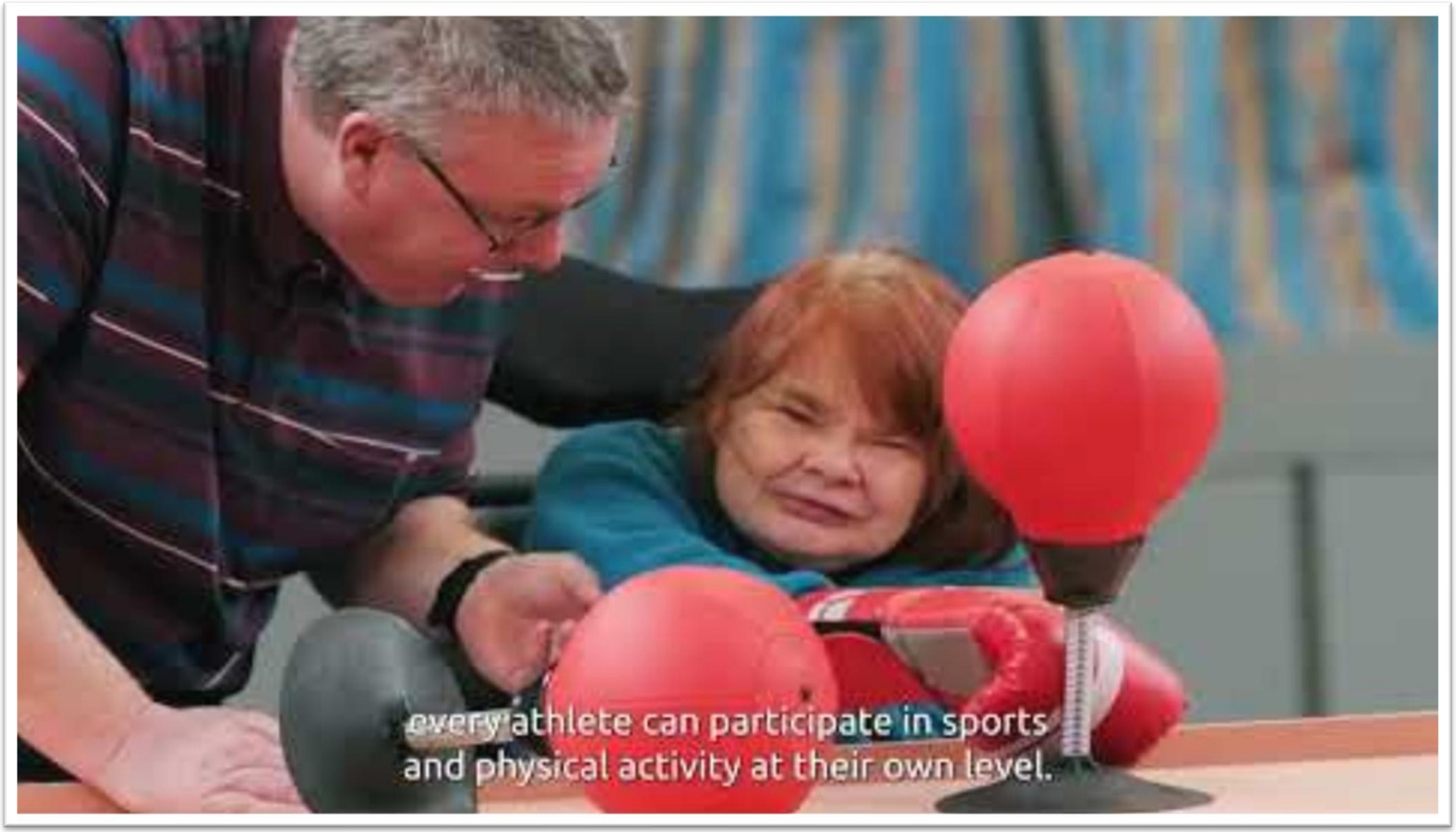
Community Highlights



Adaptive Programming



MATP


every athlete can participate in sports
and physical activity at their own level.

Adaptive Play







Adaptive Competition Structure

- Many sports have intrinsic adaptive components
  - Athletics – 25m & 50m, Wheelchair races, softball throw
  - Golf – Level 1
  - Nordic Ski – 100m
  - Softball – T-Ball

- Unified Play
  - provides a great bridge to competitive play
    - "on-court coaching"
  - Community based game-play
  - Very effective in partner sports
    - Bowling, Golf, Pickleball

- Skills Competitions
  - SOI has developed a large framework of Individual Skills Assessment Tests for Discovery or Active for Life stage participants.



Adaptive Competition Structure

- **Skills Competitions**
  - SOI has developed a large framework of Individual Skills Assessment Tests for Discovery or Active for Life stage participants.

- **Recreational Competition**
  - Modified game play
    - 5 v 5 soccer
    - 3 v 3 basketball
      - More touch time, less structure, just play
    - Modified equipment
  - Modified rule sets
    - On floor coaching
    - Controlled game-play for instruction
    - New or unique equipment
  - Community opponents









Individual Skills Competition

Basketball Sport Rules

Special Olympics





Questions?



Thank You!



Adaptive Competition

