



2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games: 7-13 February

Special Olympics Overview

HISTORY

The first International Special Olympics Games was held in 1968 at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois. However, the concept began to unfold six years earlier at a place called Camp Shriver, a day camp started by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1962 focusing on physical activity for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Sponsored by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., Foundation, the number of camps grew to 32 sites across the United States and served over 10,000 children with intellectual disabilities.

Workshops were created across the country to educate recreation directors of the benefits of recreational activity for individuals with intellectual disabilities. By 1967, Anne Burke, a workshop teacher, along with Dr. William Freeburg, the Chairman of Recreation and Outdoor Education Department at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Illinois, teamed up with Shriver and the Kennedy Foundation to host the first ever International Special Olympics Games where over 1,000 athletes from the United States and Canada competed.

Today, special Olympics serves more than 2.8 million people with intellectual disabilities in over 200 programs in 180 countries worldwide.

MISSION

The mission of the Special Olympics is to provide year-round training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic type sports to children and adults with intellectual disabilities in order to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

CURRENT GOALS

- To achieve quality growth by creating innovative opportunities to bring the Special Olympics experience to the world's nearly 200 million people with intellectual disabilities
- To create positive public attitudes toward a population that is often rejected or forgotten
- To reach 3 million athletes by the end of 2010, all the while maintaining the quality of the program
- To promote global athlete leadership and dedicate the movement to empowerment and dignity, not charity
- To change negative attitudes and misperceptions about people with intellectual disabilities, replacing stigma and rejection with an emphasis on potential, ability and acceptance



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FUNDING

For the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games to happen, approximately \$35 million of in-kind goods, services and funding must be raised through corporate partners and individual donors. These funds make it possible for adults and children with intellectual disabilities to be empowered to reach their full potential through athletic competition.

Since the Special Olympics World Games hosts athletes from across the globe, travel costs as well as meals, room and board during the event are expenses that can quickly add up. The Special Olympics is proud to provide local travel costs and offer free meals, room and board to athletes competing, no matter where they are traveling from.

The athletes' local Special Olympics program is responsible for raising travel costs to transport the athlete to the site of the Games, but once the athlete has arrived at the destination of the event, the Special Olympics World Games takes care of the rest.

HOW ARE THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS DIFFERENT FROM THE PARALYMPICS?

Special Olympics and Paralympics are two separate organizations recognized by the International Olympic Committee. The principal differences between the two lie in the disability of participating athletes and levels of ability in sports participation.

Special Olympics involves athletes from all ability levels with participation from the full range of intellectual disability. In order to create equitable divisions, through a process known as "divisioning" the goal is to have between 3-8 athletes of similar ability in a given division. Each division is a "final" allowing all athletes a fair opportunity to compete with a chance to excel. This system is designed to challenge each athlete to do his or her best while providing a meaningful and enjoyable experience.

The Paralympics involves athletes from six disability groups, usually those with physical disabilities, who compete only on the elite sports level. Competition to determine the "best" athlete or team is the goal of the Paralympics, similar to most mainstream sporting events.

HOW ARE THE INVITATIONAL GAMES DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD WINTER GAMES?

The 2008 Special Olympics Invitational Winter Games were held February 25-28 in Idaho, USA serving as a prelude to the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games to be held February 7-13. The Invitational provided the Games Organizing Committee (GOC) the opportunity to test venues and operational procedures prior to the 2009 Games, while showcasing the enthusiasm of the Idaho community.

Participation in these games provided athletes the chance to come to Idaho to witness its scenic beauty and hospitable residents, while creating memories to share with families and friends in their homelands forever.

Compared to the up to 3,000 athletes from more than 100 countries who will participate in the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games, approximately 350 athletes from ten countries competed in the 2008 Invitational. The Invitational and other test events will run on a smaller scale for the following winter sports: Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Floor Hockey, Snowboarding and Snowshoeing.

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE 2009 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD GAMES ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (2009 GOC) AND AN ACCREDITED SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROGRAM?

The Games Organizing Committee (GOC) for the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games and Special Olympics Idaho are two separate entities.

These two entities share some common goals including creating the best possible experience for all participants and increasing public awareness regarding the gifts of individuals with intellectual disabilities. However, there are some goals that differ as well. For example, Special Olympics Idaho will have a goal of stimulating the growth of high quality Special Olympics Programs throughout Idaho, and the 2009 GOC will have a goal of showcasing the talents of athletes with intellectual disabilities from throughout the world and leaving a legacy with the community and Special Olympics Idaho.

The 2009 GOC is a separately incorporated, non-profit organization, responsible via contract with Special Olympics International for planning, organizing and staging the 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games. This organization will operate with a separate budget, staff and Board of Directors from Special Olympics Idaho. In essence these are two separate businesses.

Special Olympics Idaho is independently registered as a non-profit organization. Special Olympics Idaho is accredited by Special Olympics International headquarters to continuously organize and conduct ongoing Special Olympics training and competition at the local and state level.

Upon conclusion of the Games, the 2009 GOC is dissolved and a new GOC is incorporated to run the next World Winter Games four years later; while Special Olympics Idaho will continue to function as a State Chapter and continue to offer programs for athletes with intellectual disabilities year-round.

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