

Updated Language of “Process of Adding a sport” based changes to SOI sport classification and language (updated portions in yellow)

How to add a sport currently listed and how to add a sport not currently classified with any designation by SOI/SONA:

Prior to completing the steps in the process of becoming a sport for Special Olympics New Jersey, a formal proposal must be made to the Special Olympics New Jersey Program Review Committee. (Link to proposal can be found here: <https://sonj.tfaforms.net/4733850>) Once the required steps, recommendations, and approvals have been made the following will be used as the steps to **establish sports:**

Please note: No Area can offer, organize, or conduct training or competition opportunities in any sport that is not recognized under the Special Olympics New Jersey Sport Offering listing.

Steps to establish a Sport: Note for Sports not officially classified begin at Step 2.

1. The sport must be a Special Olympics Inc. (SOI) Sport.
2. It can also be a sport offered within the larger community of New Jersey, contingent that it is not listed under *Article 1 Section 5.3 Sports that require pre-approval from SOI.*
3. The sport can also be listed as competitive option at a USA National Games, or World Games.
4. There must be a National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport with established rules, and a Health and Safety Risk Assessment (HSRA) has been conducted.

If NO, sport can be considered training only.

If YES to NGB and HSRA, then **Interest** must be established. **Interest** is defined as:

Interest for the sport is expressed by at least two (2) local training programs or two community group either from within Special Olympics New Jersey or the community at large. IE Athlete Congress or Community sport organization. Once initial interest is demonstrated a survey will be sent to coaches and staff to determine if at least one (1) Area and potentially twenty (20) athletes or four (4) teams would be interested in competing in the sport.

Once interest is established, the sport will have a two-year pilot period in the current or upcoming Programmatic year pending timing and approvals. At that time, the sport will be considered an Exhibition Sport during this time. Exhibition Sport Guidelines and definition is as follows:

- Sport season will be determined to place the exhibition sport
- Sport Management Team (SMT) is created and includes a staff liaison. The SMT will develop training protocols and materials for coaches and athletes and event guidelines for competitions at all levels should existing SOI materials not be available.
- Coach training and/or clinic may be offered.
- Exhibition sports can be demonstrated at State level competitions where appropriate
- Participation in the sport without the ability to medal can be offered at Area or Sectional/Chapter level events.

- Athletes participating in an exhibition sport may compete in another sport should the exhibition sport be placed in the same season.

After the two-year exhibition period the sport will be evaluated to assess its potential for meaningful competition.

- A minimum of (1) one Area must have competed in the exhibition period.
- *In a team sport meaningful competition means at least (4) four teams to make at least (1) one division.
- *In an individual sport meaningful competition means (20) twenty athletes to ensure enough competitive divisions for all ability levels.

*This is a guideline and will be reviewed by Special Olympics New Jersey Program Staff for assessment of equitable competition.

If meaningful competition requirements are not met, then the SMT in conjunction with Program Staff will determine if another year of exhibition status will allow the sport to reach required numbers. If yes, then the sport will be granted another year, if no then the sport will no longer receive financial or staff support for continued development and communication protocols will be activated to inform all constituents of the status of the sport.

If meaningful competition requirements are met, then the SMT in conjunction with Program Staff will determine the continued growth potential of the sport, if adding the sport is financially feasible and if the sport fits into the current sports structure without causing significant hardship on the schedule. It will then be determined based on the outcomes of the exhibition period as to which level of competition the sport will be offered in its first year **if not already classified by SOI/SONA.**

The Program Department makes the final recommendation to the President/CEO about adding or not adding the sport to the official offerings.