

Special Olympics Virginia
World and National Games Athlete Selection Process

These are the guidelines regarding the Athlete Selection for World and National Games. The intention of this process is to allow more Area involvement in the selection of athletes while maintaining a fair and random process of all eligible athletes.

At the completion of the Summer Games or Winter Games in the year prior to the World Games, a list of Gold Medal winners will be sent to the Area programs for review. The Area will at that time only have the opportunity to mark an athlete ineligible.

Areas should deem an athlete ineligible for World Games selection for the following reasons:

1) The athlete does not have two years experience (not necessarily the two years immediately prior to World or National Games) in the sport in which they want to advance to either National or World Games. Athletes who have competed in another state and are now competing in Virginia, may be eligible if they have competed in the sport for two consecutive years. This pertains to individual sports athletes only.

Team sport participants are exempt from this clause.

2) Behavior exhibited by the athlete at local and state events would render the World Games Coaching staff unable to meet the Athlete's needs.

3) Athlete would be unable to travel abroad without parental/guardian supervision for lengthy time frames (can be as long as 15-20 days)

4) The Area and/or parent/guardian is unable to provide the resources needed to assist athlete in attending training sessions prior to the games and any financial obligations to the SOVA program that are not covered by the SOVA World Games fundraising efforts (Area Assessment fee). Although Areas have not been charged for any amounts for the past World Games due to successful fund raising efforts, they are assessed a \$500 per athlete assessment upon selection of the athletes and must agree to meet this obligation should fund raising efforts by SOVA not meet the demand of the games. Areas that anticipate a financial difficulty should contact the Vice President of Program prior to making the decision to declare their athletes ineligible.

5) The athlete has not participated in the 8 week training session leading up to the state championships.

6) The parent/guardian wishes to exclude a particular athlete from being eligible for the draw.

Upon completion of the state championship qualifying event, the SOVA staff will conduct a random draw of all gold medal winners from the qualifying event according to the World Games draw and the parameters set forth by Team USA or the Mid-Atlantic Region. This draw will include all athletes marked eligible on the Master Athlete list at the time of registration for the games. Once registrations have been turned in, the status of the athlete's eligibility is can only be changed by SOVA, Team USA or the Mid-Atlantic Region.

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Upon selection, the athlete, Area and the parent/guardian agree to the following:

- 1) There will be a mandatory assessment camp and parent orientation held upon selection of the athletes. This will occur prior to the time that final registration will be due to Team USA and the World Games Organizing Committee. Coaches selected at this point will assess the athlete's ability to travel and may recommend at that time whether the athlete is capable of handling the demands of a World Games trip or not; and determine if the athlete's needs can be met by the World Games Coaching staff. The coach and the SOVA staff will then jointly determine if the athlete is suitable for World Games travel. The alternate for that position may be elevated if it is determined that the selected athlete would not be able to travel in this capacity.
- 2) Each athlete selected must attend all training sessions as outlined by his/her Coach. This may include week long or weekend long Training Camps that will require athletes to be away from home and work. Transportation must be provided by the parent/guardian or the Area to all training camps unless otherwise provided by Team USA or Special Olympics Virginia.
- 3) Athletes must, at their own expense, be able to obtain a United States Passport and Visa if necessary. The SOVA staff will assist in this process.
- 4) Athletes must, at their own expense, be able to obtain a physical/physician's signature on a World Games medical.
- 5) Athletes must be able to be out of the country, away from their families and jobs during the games (up to 12-15 days)
- 6) Athlete must agree to train in respective sport and follow the Team USA Athlete Code of Conduct at all events and trainings up to and including the World Games.
- 7) Athlete must agree to refrain from addictive habits during all World Games events and activities which includes smoking, drinking, chewing smokeless tobacco, and act in accordance with all SOVA and Team USA policies.

The World Games Staff, SOVA Staff, and Board of Directors may dismiss an athlete after selections if any of the above athlete requirements are not met. World Games coaches will report on the progress and attendance of all World Games athletes during the training period. Alternates will have the option of fulfilling all requirements of the registration process in the occasion that they may be elevated to the first position depending on Team USA guidelines, restrictions and deadlines on registration.

Areas may not determine an athlete ineligible due to past World Games or National Games experience. Areas doing so would violate a Special Olympics General Rule (Section AA;Rule 5, Section f).