

# Special Olympics New Zealand Coach Development Framework



**Special Olympics**  
New Zealand



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## Introduction

The Special Olympics New Zealand Coach Development Framework aims to provide Special Olympics club coaches with a comprehensive and progressive learning journey, equipping them with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to support Special Olympics athletes effectively. The core of the Framework focuses on providing Special Olympics New Zealand club coaches with the tools to successfully delivery quality coaching to the athletes we support across the country. Special Olympics clubs are charitable trusts where the coach demographic is made up of volunteers from a variety of backgrounds.

Our club coaches are a mix of parents, supporters, and sporting enthusiasts who have the share the purpose of enriching the lives of people with an intellectual disability through sport.



Due to the unique mix of our experiences and backgrounds within our coaching community and their status as volunteers who give up their time to support their clubs, it is essential that we can support coaches through enabling them to build the skills required to support our athletes. The education program for coaches focuses on creating a solid understanding in the following key areas.

- The Special Olympics New Zealand vision and culture.
- Coaching athletes who have an intellectual disability.
- Best practice coaching principles based on the New Zealand Coach Approach.
- An understanding of the Special Olympics sporting pathway for both athlete and coach.
- An understanding and connection to the additional learning opportunities provided through Special Olympics partner organisations here in New Zealand.

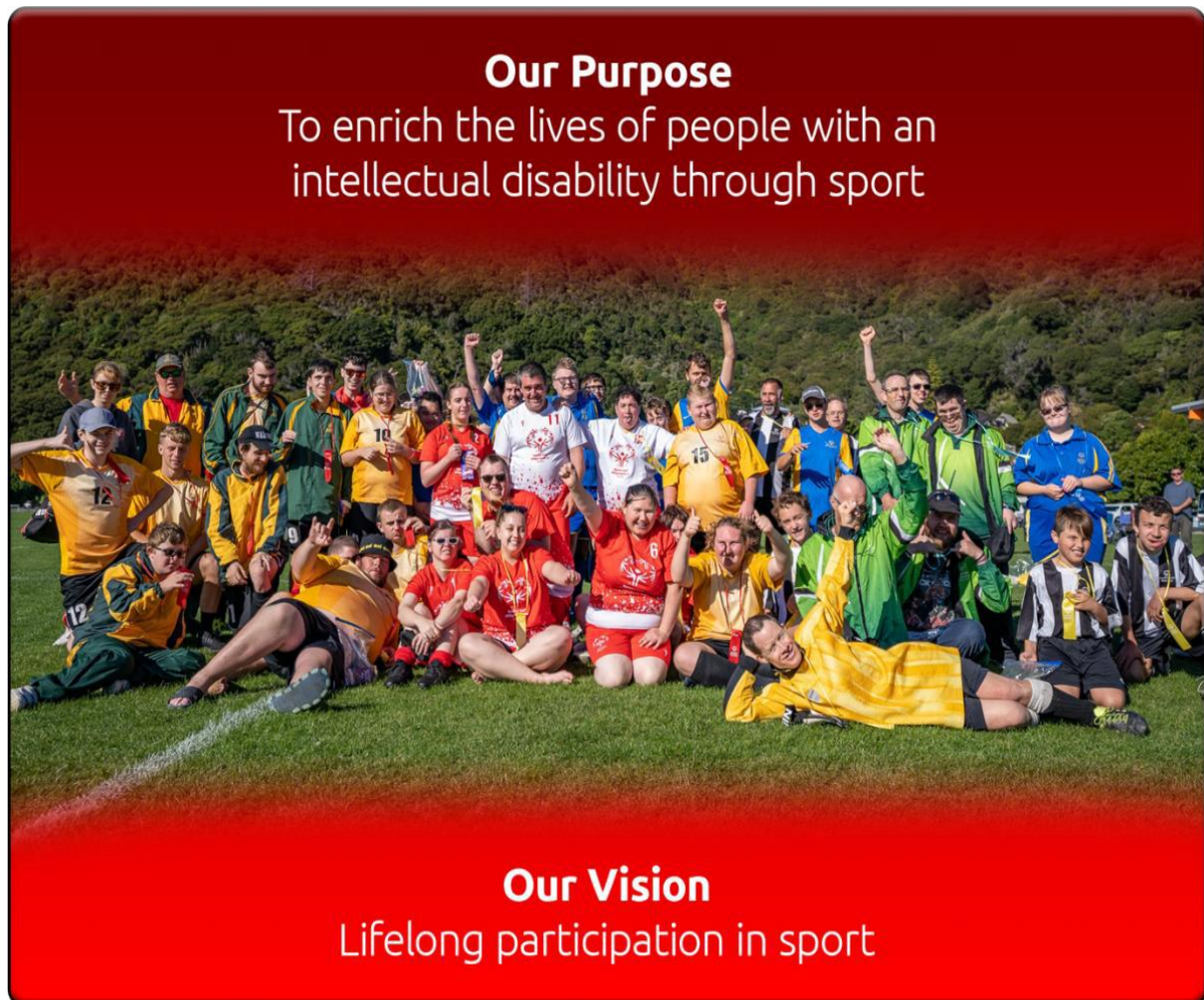
The Framework also focuses on enhancing the confidence and skills of coaches and coach developers, who primarily work with able-bodied/nondisabled athletes, to effectively support athletes with intellectual disabilities and their coaches respectively. This is achieved through Special Olympics New Zealand forming formal partnerships with national and regional sporting organizations, and creating a link between their coach developers, coaches, and the Special Olympics New Zealand sporting pathway. This link provides the opportunity for partners to access Special Olympics New Zealand coach development resources directly as a part of their internal development.





## Special Olympics New Zealand Background

Special Olympics New Zealand is dedicated to transforming lives through the power of sport for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Established in New Zealand in 1983 by Wendy and Grant Quinn, it is part of the global Special Olympics movement, which operates in over 190 countries.



Special Olympics New Zealand provides year-round sports training and competition opportunities across a range of sports, empowering athletes of all ages and abilities to achieve their personal bests, build confidence, and foster inclusion. The organization emphasizes community building, health promotion, and advocacy for the rights and capabilities of people with intellectual disabilities.

The Special Olympics 'mission extends beyond sports, aiming to create a more inclusive society by breaking down barriers, challenging stereotypes, and promoting respect and acceptance. Through collaboration with families, schools, and sporting organizations, Special Olympics New Zealand seeks to inspire communities to embrace diversity and celebrate the achievements of all athletes.

Some key offerings are as follows:

- Year-Round Sports Training and Competition: 42 Special Olympics clubs offering participation in 13 different sports, tailored for individuals of all abilities.



- Young Athletes Program: An inclusive sport and play initiative for children aimed to promote early skill development, fundamental movement skills and social interaction.
- Special Olympics Schools Program: Be Stong, Be Active/Kia Kaha, Kia Tākaro is a comprehensive school sport program aimed to support the development and capability of teachers to deliver PE to students who have an intellectual disability.
- Healthy Athletes Program: Health screenings delivered by medical professionals which supports athlete visual health, dental health, auditory health, podiatric health, and general health promotion.
- Leadership Development: Athlete Leadership Program and Athlete Input Council which empowers athletes to take on leadership roles within their communities and within Special Olympics New Zealand.
- Partnerships with National and Regional Sporting Bodies: Collaborating to develop and enhance the inclusive sporting opportunities that exist within mainstream sports pathways.

# Special Olympics New Zealand Coaching Strategy

## Our Vision

To develop a high-quality coaching environment that enables coaches to meet the needs of all Special Olympics athletes and their coaches

## Our Philosophy

To develop coaches that share and reflect our Special Olympics values: Inclusion, Courage, Respect, Integrity, Excellence.

## Objectives

To provide a framework that promotes a culture of ongoing growth for all coaches regardless of their level and experience. Opportunities are accessible, relevant, and prioritise inclusive coaching practice across all levels of our sporting pathway. This practice must reflect the needs of the athletes we support through the provision of resources tailored to coaching athletes with an Intellectual disability.

## Strategic Alignment

Special Olympics New Zealand's strategy focuses on enriching the lives of people with an intellectual disability through sport. And that through this regular sporting activity, lifelong participation is achieved. The strategic plan focuses on three pillars.

1. Increased Participation
2. More Sport Pathways
3. Special Olympics New Zealand Capability

The Special Olympics New Zealand Coaching strategy aligns with the organisations strategic goals by emphasizing the importance of developing a well-supported coaching workforce, fostering inclusive and high-quality coaching practices, and leveraging partnerships to broaden our impact. The following are examples of the alignment:

### Developing a High-Quality Coaching Workforce:

Our Coach Development Framework provides our Special Olympics coaches with links to workshops, seminars, and coaching clinics to enhance the skills and knowledge of our coaches. This directly supports our strategic goal of providing high-quality development opportunities for our coaches

### **Fostering Inclusive Coaching Practices:**

Our Coach Development Framework highlights the need for inclusive coaching practices, particularly for disabled participants. Training includes specialized resources tailored to the unique needs of coaching disabled athletes.

### **Leveraging Partnerships:**

Building strong partnerships is a cornerstone of our framework. Our major aim is to collaborate with a selection of National Sporting Organisations of whom deliver SONZ pathway sports.

### **Sustaining and Expanding Our Reach:**

Our Coach Development Framework includes goals for sustaining and expanding our programs through creating long lasting and robust community engagement. Through building genuine connection and shared interests with the wider New Zealand sporting community we aim to build high functioning and long-lasting partnerships.

Overall, the proposed project is deeply integrated with Special Olympics New Zealand's strategic plan. It addresses our key priorities of developing a skilled and inclusive coaching workforce, building strategic partnerships, and ensuring the sustainability and expansion of our programs. This alignment will help us achieve our mission of providing exceptional and inclusive sports experiences for all our athletes.





## Programme Overview

The framework recognises that Special Olympics coaches are unique and develop in a variety of ways. This means that we must ensure that there is diverse range of learning opportunities available to Special Olympics coaches across our network with the opportunity for practical application. Additionally, in line with the New Zealand Coach Approach, all internally offered opportunities encourage the coach to take an athlete centred approach to their practice.

The core development opportunities are as follows:

1. Special Olympics New Zealand Internal Coaching Courses (in person delivery)

Key competencies are:

- Attitudes and disposition towards coaching athletes who have a disability.
- Best practice coaching in New Zealand.
- Coaching an athlete/s with an intellectual disability.
- Leadership, understanding an athlete, and coaching models.

2. Special Olympics New Zealand e-learning opportunities (online)

Key competencies are:

- Understanding intellectual disability in sport.
- Attitudes and disposition towards coaching athletes who have a disability.
- Special Olympics culture and sporting pathways
- Coaching an athlete/s with an intellectual disability.
- Special Olympics policy and procedures.

3. Special Olympics International e-learning opportunities. (online)

Key competencies are:

- Special Olympics International coaching roles (Sports Assistant, Coach Assistant, Coach).
- Special Olympics World Games Preparation (Team management and coaches)
- Special Olympics Unified Sports Coach.
- Special Olympics Young Athletes Coach
- Special Olympics Policy

#### 4. National/Regional Sporting Partner learning opportunities (blended)

Key Competencies are:

- Foundation coaching courses.
- Sport specific coaching courses.



# Special Olympics New Zealand Coaching Pathway

The coaching pathway for coaches through Special Olympics New Zealand is split between internal and external offerings. The internal pathway outlines the coach development process for Special Olympics club coaches here in New Zealand. The external pathway outlines the coach development process for a New Zealand based coach who does not coach within the Special Olympics network. These could include coaches involved with national, regional, or club sporting bodies at any level of competition.

## Internal Pathway

The Internal coach development pathway is broken down into four stages of learning.

**Stage 1** focuses on building core/foundation coaching knowledge which is delivered to club coaches directly from Special Olympics New Zealand. These courses prioritize current best coaching practices in New Zealand in relation to working with athletes who have an intellectual disability and can be tailored to the needs of clubs as the coaching environment changes.

**Stage 2** focuses on a mix of required and suggested Special Olympics International e-learning opportunities. Club coaches are required to complete a selection of Special Olympics International e-learning coaching courses which provide official accreditation and recognition as a Special Olympics coach.

**Stage 3** focuses on learning and application of best practice coaching within New Zealand, and Special Olympics New Zealand sporting landscape. Information which is not found in the Special Olympics International e-learning. This e learning is owned and supported directly by Special Olympics New Zealand and hosted on Sports Tutor and is available to anyone. A selection of these courses will also support non-Special Olympics community coaches and program leaders as a part of the external coaching pathway.

**Stage 4** focuses on externally led and region-specific continual learning opportunities run by Special Olympics New Zealand sporting partners. These suggested learning opportunities are regularly shared with Special Olympics club coaches through the Special Olympics New Zealand Coach Training Calendar. This avenue provides the opportunity for coaches to connect with national/regional coaching leads delivering within their region and within their chosen sporting code. Following this pathway will enable Special Olympics New Zealand coaches to become accredited coaches within a particular sport. Generic coaching development opportunities will also be shared as available across regions.



Figure 1 shows the Internal coach development process.

Figure 1



## External Pathway

The external coaching pathway aims to support coaches/coach developers who sit outside of the Special Olympics New Zealand community by providing them with an opportunity to build the confidence and knowledge to support athletes who have an intellectual disability. For those involved in delivering coach development, these courses will provide an opportunity to learn and upskill so that the coach developer can confidently support other coaches within their network. These coaches will be connected to this opportunity through their national and regional coaching leads. This pathway is split into two stages.

**Stage 1** is comprised of a series of suggested e-learning for an external coach/coach developer to complete depending on their focus area. This e-learning is specifically designed for an external coach/organisation who may not coach within the Special Olympics New Zealand community. This e-learning will provide comprehensive insight into intellectual disability, and coaching athletes who have an intellectual disability within a New Zealand coaching context.

**Stage 2** is comprised of direct partnership and connection between the Special Olympics New Zealand coaching network and the national/regional sporting bodies coaching network. Special Olympics New Zealand will provide the opportunity for coaches and developers to connect with Special Olympics club coaches and athletes as an experiential learning opportunity. Special Olympics New Zealand will also endeavour to support national/regional partner programs which provide a suitable learning platform for coaches within both networks.



Figure 2 shows the external coach development process.

Figure 2



Please note that many National Sporting bodies also have their own coach development frameworks which form the foundation of coach developer/coach knowledge within their networks. Special Olympics New Zealand also supports the development of these frameworks to ensure coaching athletes who have a disability are included within coach development delivery.

## Supporting Policies

Special Olympics New Zealand provides extensive support to its coaches through a range of policies, resources, and training opportunities designed to promote effective and inclusive coaching practices. Key policies, such as the volunteers & unified partners code of conduct, athlete code of conduct and the Special Olympics New Zealand gender policy, ensure that coaches adhere to professional standards while fostering an inclusive and respectful environment for all athletes. The participant protection framework promotes safe practices to protect all our members from possible harm and exploitation while engaging with Special Olympics activity. Additionally, coaches receive training and ongoing support for the Game Management System (GMS), enabling them to efficiently manage athlete data, event entries, and performance tracking.

## Special Olympics New Zealand Coaches/Volunteer Code of Conduct

The Special Olympics New Zealand Coaches/Volunteer Code of Conduct acts as the backbone for the support and growth of a positive and constructive coaching culture. We encourage that Special Olympics coaches actively share and refer to the code of conduct to support the network

I agree that while serving as a Special Olympics New Zealand Volunteer or Unified Partner, I will:

- Treat everyone involved with courtesy and respect, and aim to make Special Olympics a safe, welcoming and positive environment.
- Act in a responsible manner, set a good example for Athletes and be an ambassador for Special Olympics in the wider community.
- Work to understand my Volunteer or Unified Partner role and responsibilities and endeavour to deliver on these.
- Follow the established rules and guidelines of Special Olympics New Zealand and Special Olympics International.
- Act with consideration and good judgement in all interpersonal relationships, and act in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Special Olympics New Zealand Participant Protection Framework and Athlete Dating Policy.
- Comply with the Code of Conduct for People Working or Volunteering with Vulnerable Athletes outlined in Section 5 of the Special Olympics New Zealand Participant Protection Framework.

- Refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances while involved in any Special Olympics training, competition or event.
- Be a responsible guardian of any confidential information I may have access to, and respect others' right to privacy.
- Address any concerns or complaints to the Special Olympics volunteer in charge, a Special Olympics New Zealand staff member, or to the Chief Executive Officer of Special Olympics New Zealand, using the SONZ Complaints Process as appropriate.
- Respect the physical integrity of Athletes. This should not preclude any reasonable or spontaneous expressions of warmth or celebration, but expressions must be acceptable to all parties.
- Not use my Volunteer and/or Unified Partner role to promote personal beliefs if these are incompatible with Special Olympics principles.
- Report any emergency or any situation likely to cause harm to any individual or property to the Special Olympics volunteer in charge (after taking any immediate action to ensure the health and safety of others). If further support is needed, report concerns to a Special Olympics New Zealand staff member.
- Abide by Special Olympics New Zealand policies as they relate to Athletes, Volunteers and Unified Partners.

## Special Olympics New Zealand Coaches Oath

*"In the name of all coaches and in the spirit of sportsmanship, I promise that we will act professionally, respect others, and ensure a positive experience for all. I promise to provide quality sports and training opportunities in a safe environment for all athletes".*

