



Special Olympics New Zealand Affiliate Programme Club Guide

Purpose of the Affiliate Partner Programme:

Our Affiliate Partner Programme supports community sports providers who offer an inclusive sporting environment for athletes with an intellectual disability/autism.

It builds strong and long-term relationships between Special Olympics New Zealand and the sporting community by offering regular participation, skill development from trained coaches, and access to both Special Olympic New Zealand and mainstream competition pathways.

Accessing the Special Olympics New Zealand Participation Pathway

Any athlete who has an intellectual disability who participates regularly in registered Affiliate Partner Programmes/events can access the Special Olympics New Zealand competition pathway once connected with and registered with their local Special Olympics Club.

Please note that the Affiliate Partner must represent one of Special Olympics New Zealand's sanctioned sports to be eligible to access the Special Olympics sporting pathway. Affiliate Partners who do not deliver a Special Olympics sanctioned sport do not create a Special Olympics pathway opportunity. Athletes involved in non-pathway sports programmes are still encouraged to connect with their local Special Olympics New Zealand club to get involved.

What this means for Special Olympics Clubs

- Special Olympics New Zealand will work with national and regional sporting bodies to identify suitable sporting programmes and events who may become official Affiliate Partner Programmes. These partners will be shared, promoted and listed on the Special Olympics New Zealand website.
- Special Olympics Clubs should be aware of Affiliate Partner Programmes within their regions as these may present additional participation opportunities for current Special Olympic athletes. Prospective Special Olympics athletes may also reach out to Special Olympics clubs to register with the club and attend their first Tier 1 Special Olympics event. Clubs should be ready and open to receiving this contact.



Registration

- The new athlete must be registered with the Special Olympics club using the standard registration form and process.
- The new athlete must register a support person through the *Affiliate Programme Support Person Registration Form* during the lead up to the event. This support person will officially act as 1:1 support for the athlete at their first Special Olympics Tier 1 club event which will enable Special Olympics clubs to control their 1:4 volunteer to athlete ratio. Clubs will be responsible for supporting this process and sharing this form with a new athlete and their support person. This registration form is not required to be submitted to SONZ.
- Following an athlete's first club event, the support person may continue to use the Affiliate Programme Support Person Registration process for the remainder of the calendar year. To continue in this capacity beyond this point, the support person is required to officially register as a volunteer with the Special Olympics club.
- If the athlete involved in the Affiliate Partner Programme wishes to attend a Special Olympics team sport for their first Tier 1 event, the athlete and supporter must arrange to attend 2x club trainings within that chosen sport as preparation and an opportunity to connect with existing club teammates.
- If the athlete is involved in an individual sport such as athletics or swimming, the new athlete can attend their first Tier 1 athletics or swimming event without attending Special Olympics Club training.
- The club needs to enter the athlete into the event via the usual entry form and process. An athlete's support person is to be manually entered to the event entry form as a 1:1 supporter.

Competition Ready

To become an Affiliate Partner Programme in one of Special Olympics New Zealand's sanctioned sports, the programme or event must meet certain requirements to ensure an athlete is ready for competing at a Special Olympics club event.

These requirements are split into two areas:



- Ensuring an athlete's experience is positive and creates an environment akin to what we expect at Special Olympics events.
- Through attendance at an Affiliate Programme an athlete has the skills and sports knowledge required to attend a Special Olympics event.

Affiliate Programme Requirements

- The programme is deemed suitable for athletes who have an intellectual disability or autism to attend and have a positive experience.
- Opportunities within the programme are age appropriate and cater for a mixture of ability levels.
- Programme coordinators have undergone training/education for delivering activity to individuals who have a disability.
- The programme is well established as a part of core business and is not considered a pilot program.
- The programme provides skill development opportunities for athletes.
- The programme provides a sense of belonging and community within those who attend.
- The organisation has an established safeguarding policy.
- The programme meets the sport specific requirements set out by SONZ for an athlete to transition into a Special Olympics club event. An example of this is that 5x5 and 3x3 basketball is run regularly during the Affiliate Partner Program delivery which are common formats at Special Olympics club events.

For more information on Affiliate Partners in your region please visit the website, contact your local RSC, or the SONZ Partnership and Sports Manager.

