

# Special Olympics Minnesota Sports

*How sports become official offerings at Special Olympics Minnesota*

Sports are the foundation of Special Olympics Minnesota, providing athletes of all abilities with opportunities to compete, grow and connect. We are committed to offering accessible and inclusive sports programs, always looking for new ways to engage athletes and expand participation. To ensure sustainable growth, we follow a structured process for introducing and evaluating sports at different competition levels.

## Adding New Sports

New sports begin at the **recreational level**, where delegations introduce and build interest locally. Delegations can get creative and explore sports that interest their athletes. As participation grows, delegations start hosting **invitational competitions**, which are locally organized competitive events that involve other delegations.

Once a sport has **at least eight delegations** participating in invitationals, it advances to a **Regional Competition** the following year. If interest continues to grow, a **State Competition** will be added the next year.

## Sport Progression Levels

### Recreational

Local, year-round sports, including creative options.



### Invitational

Scrimmages or small competitions hosted by local delegations.



### Regional

Official SOMN competitions that serve as qualifiers for State.



### State

Official high-level competitions featuring the most popular sports.

## Reviewing Existing Sports

To ensure consistency, existing sports are also assessed using the same process—in reverse. If fewer than eight delegations participate in a Regional or State sport, SOMN staff will consider shifting it to an invitational format. If participation later reaches eight delegations again, the sport can re-enter the process to move up to Regional or State status.

This process ensures that sports grow and evolve based on team's interests and participation.

