



## 2026 Special Olympics USA Games Team Wyoming Selection Process

The 2026 Special Olympics USA Games will take place June 20-26, 2026, in Minnesota.

Special Olympics Wyoming (SOWY) will take a team to Special Olympics USA Games, and we strive to make the selection process as fair as possible for all athletes. This document relays how SOWY will select all delegation members from Wyoming for the 2026 Special Olympics USA Games.

### **Timeline:**

**June 2024:** SOWY submitted a request for a quota to Special Olympics North America (SONA).

**Mid-August 2024:** SONA determined quotas, then notified programs.

Wyoming was quoted:

- Athletics: 6 athletes, 2 coaches
- Bocce: 4 athletes, 1 coach
- Bowling: 2 athletes, 2 Unified Partners, 1 coach
- Powerlifting: 2 athletes, 1 coach
- Swimming: 4 athletes, 1 coach

**August 2024 – May 2025:** SOWY athletes will qualify for Team Wyoming by competing at state competitions.

**May – June 2025:** SOWY will select all delegation members to make up Team Wyoming.

**August 2025:** Registration of all Team Wyoming delegation members is due to SONA.

### **Special Olympics Wyoming will be using the following process to select athletes:**

1. ALL athletes competing in the sports that SOWY was quoted during the following state events will be entered once into a pool. Athletes who have already competed at a USA Games or have traveled nationally or internationally on behalf of the organization recently will have their name entered into the pool once, and all other athletes will have their name entered twice.

2024 Summer Sports Classic (August 2-3): bocce & bowling

2024 State Fall Tournament (October 9-11): bocce & bowling

2025 State Summer Games (May): athletics, powerlifting, & swimming

2. After the conclusion of the 2025 State Summer Games, SOWY staff will complete a draw for each spot on the team. We will draw 6 names for athletics, 4 names for bocce, etc. 2 alternates will also be drawn for each spot.
3. At that point, SOWY Staff will contact area directors, local and team coordinators, and coaches to determine each athlete's eligibility to compete on Team Wyoming based on several criteria. These criteria include sportsmanship, attitude, behavior, ability to travel, independence, stamina for long days, and sport-based skills. If an athlete is considered ineligible, the same process will follow for the 1<sup>st</sup> alternate, etc. until each spot is filled.
4. Once athletes are selected for each spot on the team, SOWY staff will contact each athlete or guardian of each athlete to discuss the opportunity in detail and ensure that the athlete is willing to go, as well as ensure that the athlete/family is willing and able to commit to consistent communication, turning in paperwork on time, training, participating in a training camp, fundraising, and other commitments. If athletes or their families opt not to participate, the same process will be followed for the alternates until that spot is filled.
5. Once each spot is filled on the team and all athletes have accepted their spot, official announcements will be released on social media.

Team Wyoming has 2 spots for Unified Partners (bowling). These will be considered in the same manner as athletes.

**Special Olympics Wyoming will be using the following process to select coaches:**

1. An application via Google forms will be released and due in spring of 2025.
2. All SOWY coaches will be encouraged to apply. The application will ask about experience, aptitude, attitude, and availability.
3. Further interviews will be conducted if necessary to determine the best candidates per sport.
4. Selected coaches will be contacted and the details of the opportunity will be discussed. Coaches will need to commit to consistent communication, turning in paperwork on time, training their athletes, participating in a training camp, fundraising, and other responsibilities.
5. Once each coach spot is filled on the team and all coaches have accepted their spot, official announcements will be released on social media.

*Please contact the SOWY office at (307) 235-3062 or email Laura at [sports@specialolympicswy.org](mailto:sports@specialolympicswy.org) if you have any questions about this process.*