



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA OF SPRINGFIELD Special Olympic Bowling Team: The Basics

2018 Special Olympics Dates to Remember:

Intent to Compete Due	6/30/2018	
Final Entry Due	7/27/2018	
Region H Competition	Saturday, 8/25/2018	Springfield
Sectional Competition	Sunday, 11/4/2018	Moline
State Competition	Saturday, 12/1/2018	Peoria

What are some things to consider before deciding to participate?

Social: Capacity and independence to handle for noise, crowds, mechanical breakdowns, delays, people not known to them and ability to communicate or signal concerns or personal needs. (Coaches are allowed down on the lanes if the bowler has a concern or personal need they cannot fully communicate but they must be able to signal that in some way to the volunteers.)

Skill: Ability to bowl on their own for the required number of games. Neither parents or coaches may go down on the lanes to assist as they bowl. The bowler is the athlete and this is a competition. There are no bumpers allowed in competition.

Schedule: Optimally, the bowler should be available to participate in all 3 rounds, Area, Sectional and State. Entering as a single bowler and then winning but not available to attend the next competition would be keeping another bowler from moving forward. A bowler who is only available to compete at the Area competition will not be allowed to enter a Doubles or Team competition. The competitions do not allow for alternates. **Rules state, should a member of a Doubles or Team be sick or unable to compete once the initial area entry is submitted, the other athletes may participate in the next round but would do so without a full team. For example, in team competition if one bowler was not able to participate the other 3 bowlers would advance but their score would include only 3 bowlers against teams that have 4 athletes. When forming Doubles and Teams consider the bowler's reliability and general health issues. When in doubt, entry in the Singles competition is recommended. YMCA coaches will have final determination of doubles and team entries.**

What are the other qualifications?

Special Olympics requires a medical application on file, referred to as a Med App and an average score comprised of 12 games without a bumper.

Med Apps – These expire every 2 years from the date of the exam. The Med App submitted must be the original form with original signatures. Copies are not accepted. Med App forms are available from the YMCA staff at the bowling alley. A doctor must complete the right column section. The bowler or their parent or guardian completes the remainder of the form. It is important it is signed, has complete insurance information and prescription medications are listed either in the area in the right column or attached on a separate page. The YMCA will submit that form and register the bowler as one of our athletes. The YMCA recommends Med Apps be renewed January – June so they are current through all rounds of competition, August – December.

Average Score – The bowler must have bowled 10 of the required 12 games at the YMCA program between September – July. We will accept scores from outside our program, like going to bowl as a family. For games played outside our program a score sheet with the date and the score are required.

What if a Med App is on file for another sport or with another agency?

Just let the YMCA staff know. We will coordinate with Special Olympics to obtain an approved copy of the Med App for our records. Even if the athlete competes in another sport with another agency they can be entered for bowling as a YMCA bowler. They may not however be entered for Special Olympics bowling with more than one agency.

What if the bowler lives in a group home legally in the care of an agency?

Bowlers with other agencies are welcome to compete on the YMCA team if their agency is not sponsoring a team. The representative of the agency must be present at all times with the YMCA simply serving as the host agency. Bowlers from agencies may only compete as an individual athlete. They are not eligible to enter on a doubles or team division.

How is Special Olympics for bowling scheduled?

Most Special Olympic sports competitions are one day events. Bowling has a succession of qualifying rounds. The first round of competition is called Region H. It is held in Springfield right in our home alley, Strike N Spare West. For winners of gold at the Area competition in Springfield, the 2nd round is Sectionals. It is the first Sunday in November in Moline. Winners of gold in their division at Sectionals move on to the final round, the State competition held in Peoria the first Saturday in December.

What are the competition competitions?

Bowlers can choose between 4 different competitions but can only compete in one. The YMCA coaches will make the final determination of eligibility and entry.

Ramp – In this competition the bowler will be required to use a ramp to bowl. Volunteers will move the ramp as directed by the athlete or the athlete can position the ramp themselves. Volunteers are prohibited from adjusting the ramp unless directed by the athlete. For visually impaired bowlers, the volunteer will communicate the position of the pins, the relative position of the ramp and the action that resulted from the previous roll. Ramp bowlers do not switch lanes during competition and bowl 2 games. Bowlers may sit or stand to use the ramp.

Single – In this competition the athlete is bowling against other athletes in their division. The athlete bowls 3 games and does switch lanes for each frame.

Doubles – In this competition, 2 bowlers combine their individual scores for a doubles entry. Any 2 bowlers can compete together. Each athlete bowls 3 games and switches lanes for each frame. Ramp bowlers may participate as a doubles partner but must bowl 3 games and must switch lanes for each frame.

Team – In this competition, 4 bowlers combine their individual scores for a team entry. Any 4 bowlers can compete together. Each athlete bowls 3 games and switches lanes for each frame. Ramp bowlers may participate on a team but must bowl 3 games and must switch lanes for each frame.

What does switching lanes mean?

Each lane in the alley has its negatives and positives. In the competition the athletes actually bowl on a pair of lanes. By switching lanes no bowler has an advantage because all bowlers are experiencing the same lane conditions. One of the skills a bowler must have or develop is the ability to watch for their name at the bottom of screen. That will indicate it is their turn to bowl. Accompanying their name is an arrow, left or right which indicates which lane to bowl on. In most cases, the arrows will change direction but their name and score will stay on the screen where they were first listed. Volunteers will help them and a pattern will develop. We do practice this regularly but this does take even the most experienced bowler some time to acclimate.

How are divisions determined?

Special Olympics divides athletes by score but also takes into consideration the age of the bowler and the gender. When there are enough entries to warrant it they will separate based on age and gender. Often times though this is not the case and the average is the determining factor. Averages within divisions must not exceed a 20% difference. So for a bowler with a very low average they may not have any competition. They do still have to compete in order to be awarded gold and advance. Those with high average need not worry. They will have lots of competition. You will see some great bowling.

Is there a cost?

There is no charge to compete in Special Olympics for any sport but you will incur travel and meal costs to get to the competitions. For Sectional and State competitions the YMCA does their best to arrange a bus or group transportation. Usually a lunch is provided to athletes. All other meals, snacks and souvenirs are the responsibility of the athlete. Dietary restrictions cannot be accommodated so the athlete should plan accordingly. Coaches will assist as needed but athletes will be expected to be responsible for their money and any personal equipment.

What is the spectator role during the competition?

Cheering, smiling, feeding and hugging with lots of high fives for your athlete and all the other competitors. This is not the time to "coach". It is a time to let them do their best, have fun and be encouraged. If they are having poor performance, share with the YMCA staff and let us do the coaching.

Families and guardians are vital to these events. The YMCA will have bowlers competing throughout the alley. Just like during the program the YMCA staff is concentrated with the ramp bowlers and those needing more assistance. We depend on families, guardians and caregivers to be our eyes and ears. You may be asked to keep an eye out for YMCA bowlers who do not have families who can attend. The YMCA staff is ultimately responsible but just like during our program, everybody pitches in.

One of the key roles is to keep track of the scores to ensure they are being recorded correctly or to alert the volunteers if there is a problem. The volunteers are to be treated with the upmost respect and courtesy. You may request a volunteer stop the activity until you can notify a YMCA coach. Only a YMCA coach can file a protest or interact with the officials to make a change. The YMCA expects and will tolerate no less than good sportsmanship at the highest level from all athletes and families.

When the competition is complete the athletes will wait for the awards. Get your camera ready. Once competition is complete and there are no bowlers on the adjacent lanes spectators may move down into the lanes to take pictures as needed. The YMCA coaches try to be at every award ceremony but if we are not, please get us copies of the pictures. Email those pictures you are willing to share with the YMCA for marketing and promotion purposes to kandruch@springfieldymca.org

You will be provided with a "psych" sheet which will indicate their lane assignment, entry score and information on the athletes they are competing against. Competing athletes may not be in the same lane or there may be athletes on their lanes competing in other divisions. Sometimes with scratches and changes by other teams we are not sure exactly who is in what division and who won until the medals and ribbons are awarded. We suggest you enjoy the day and not worry too much about the outcome.

Are there other Special Olympic sports?

There are many sports and opportunities. The YMCA offers bowling and swimming as a Special Olympic competition. The YMCA offers many other recreational programs and memberships. Learn more at www.springfieldymca.org or visit either of our branches, Downtown, 701 South 4th Street (corner 4th & Cook Streets) or Kerasotes, 4550 West Iles (corner of Iles Ave & Archer Elevator Road)

Once you have a Med App on file with Special Olympics, the athlete may participate in any event for which they qualify. For any Special Olympic event, you can either enter as a team with a sponsoring organization, like the YMCA or you can enter as an independent where the parent or guardian or trusted adult is registered as the coach.

To learn more about the Special Olympic sports and competitions offered, call Lynde Pavich at Special Olympics, 217-544-3023, lpavich@soill.org.

Link to Special Olympics, Sangamon, Region H: <http://www.soill.org>

The Springfield Park District has many opportunities to participate.

Link to Park District Information: <http://www.springfieldparks.org/specialNeeds/>