

Minimum Coach Education Requirements for Special Olympics Ireland Clubs



This document outlines the minimum qualifications assistant coaches, coaches and head coaches should have when coaching in our Special Olympics clubs. These updated minimum standards will bring Special Olympics clubs in closer alignment to Coaching Ireland recommendations for all National Governing Bodies. Each Special Olympics club must have an assigned Head Coach with the appropriate qualification. It is obviously desirable that Special Olympics coaches are as well trained as possible. This means that coaches should regularly up skill and should strive to increase their qualification levels. In addition:

- No unqualified volunteer should be assigned as an assistant coach, coach or head coach, without the relevant qualification.
- In Special Olympics clubs with team sports, it is recommended that a suitably qualified head coach is assigned per team.
- Every assistant coach, coach and head coach should have at a minimum Sport Ireland - Safeguarding 1 - Child Welfare & Protection Basic Awareness Course or Sports NI - Safeguarding Children & Young People in Sport (basic awareness raising) prior to receiving their coaching awards or being assigned to these positions.
- All assistant coaches and coaches should only be coaching under the guidance of a head coach who is qualified to the appropriate level.
- All assistant coaches, coaches and head coaches should only be coaching within the parameters that their qualifications allow e.g. a person with a level 1 Swim Teachers qualification should not be coaching without a Level 2 coach being present; Athletics coaches should have a level 2 coaching qualification to coach high jump.
- Assistant coaches are any volunteer/s assisting with the delivery of the sports programme in the club, in any manner. They may be required to assist the coach or head coach. Examples of tasks may include providing 1 to 1 assistance for an athlete, setting up cones or equipment, handing out bibs, supervising a small number of athletes for a particular skill/game or taking athletes for a warm up/cool down activity under the guidance of the Head coach.
- With the exception of Aquatics and Kayaking, a relevant qualification of level 1 or above from another recognised National Governing Body will suffice as an assistant coach qualification. This qualification may be from a sport aside from the official sports offered by SOI

All new Clubs will require the minimum requirements before starting for all assistant coaches, coaches and head coaches.

Existing clubs will have until December 2020 to implement the minimum requirements for all assistant coaches, coaches and head coaches.

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| Sport | Assistant Coach Minimum | Coach Minimum | Head Coach Minimum | Ideal Head Coach in line with Coaching Ireland (if different from recommended) |
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| Alpine Skiing * | Introduction to Coaching Practices | Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors Level 1 | Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors Level 1 | Irish Association of Snowsports Instructors Level 2 |
| Aquatics | Swim Ireland Helpers Certificate Certified only when working under an ASA Level 1/2 qualified teacher/coach IWS Level 1 – Aquatics Assistant for People with Disabilities Certified only when working under a qualified teacher/coach | ASA Level 1 Teacher of Disabilities* ASA Level 1 Swim Teacher* ASA Level 1 Coaching* *Certified only when working under an ASA Level 2 qualified teacher/coach (same qualification) IWS assistant Swim teachers* certified only when coaching under a fully qualified swim teacher IWS Level 2 – Aquatics Teacher for People with Disabilities (one to one coaching only) ASA Level 2 Teacher of Disabilities | ASA Level 2 Swim Teacher ASA Level 2 Coaching IWS Swim teachers IWS Level 3 - Aquatics Leader for People with Disabilities | |
| Athletics | Introduction to Coaching Practices | Leading Athletics or Assisting Coaching, (UKA) Athletics Leader or Assistant Coach (AI) | Athletics Coach Level 1(AI) Athletics Coach (UKA) | Athletics Ireland Level 2, 3 Athletics NI Athletics Coach |
| Badminton | Introduction to Coaching Practices | Badminton Ireland Introductory Coaching Course or Instructor's Course | Badminton Ireland Level 1 | Badminton Ireland Level 2 |
| Basketball | Introduction to Coaching Practices | Basketball Ireland Introduction to Basketball Coaching | Basketball Ireland Level 1 | Basketball Ireland Level 2 |
| Bocce | Introduction to Coaching Practices | Introduction to Coaching Bocce | Special Olympics Ireland Bocce Level 1 | |
| Bowling | Introduction to Coaching Practices | ITBA Introductory Course, BTBA FUNDamentals | ITBA Level 1, BTBA Level 1 Foundation Coach | ITBA Level 2 BTBA 2- Developmental coach |

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| Equestrian | Introduction to Coaching Practices | Horse Sport Ireland Introduction to Coaching | Horse Sport Ireland level 1 and RDAI Group Instructor level 1 BHS Preliminary teachers | Horse Sport Ireland Level 2 and RDAI Group Instructor level 2 |
| Floorball* | Introduction to Coaching Practices | IFF floorball seminar, Special Olympics Ireland workshop | IFF floorball seminar, SOI workshop | |
| Football | Introduction to Coaching Practices/ IFA grassroots Introductory/ IFA Level 1 Coaching Disabled Footballers | FAI Kick Start 1 and 2 plus 3 workshops/Senior Intro plus 2 workshops IFA level 1 award | FAI UEFA D license | |
| Golf | Introduction to Coaching Practices | SO Golf Leader Course | SO Golf Leader Course | PGA Level 1 |
| Gymnastics | Introduction to Coaching Practices | Gym Start, Gym Edge, Introductory/Introductory MAG/WAG British Gymnastics – Awards Scheme Coach | Irish Gymnastics - Level 1 Coaching Award in relevant Gymnastics Discipline British Gymnastics – Level 1 Coach in relevant discipline | Irish Gymnastics – Level 2+ Coaching Award in relevant Gymnastics discipline British Gymnastics – Level 2 in relevant Gymnastics discipline |
| Kayaking | “Learn to Paddle” Level 1 Coaching Award | Level 1 Kayak Instructor Award | Level 2 Kayak Instructor Award | Level 3 Kayak Instructor award |
| Table Tennis | Introduction to Coaching Practices | ITTA Introduction to coaching Table Tennis | ITTA Level 1 Coaching Award | ITTA Level 2 Coaching Award |
| Pitch and Putt | Introduction to Coaching Practices | Introductory Pitch and Putt Coaching Award | Level 1 Pitch and Putt Coaching Award | |
| Motor Activities Training Programme | Introduction to Coaching Practices | MATP Workshop (delivered on a regional basis) | MATP Workshop | MATP Workshop |