



SOGA Winter State Games - Parent Information

When: January 20-22, 2012

Where: Competitions are held throughout Smyrna/Marietta due to the diverse equipment and space needed for the games, such as bowling lanes, basketball courts, weights, etc.

Sports: basketball skills and team, powerlifting, hockey skills, bowling

How do I make sure my athlete is registered for the winter games?

You must contact Michelle Padgett at mpadgett@forsyth.k12.ga.us or 770-887-2461 by the registration deadline listed on the website's calendar. If you have a new athlete, a parent and medical consent is required and must be turned in by the date given by your coach – otherwise, your athlete will be ineligible to participate. Michelle will let you know if any paperwork is due or expired.

On the day of the Games, a SO Forsyth representative will register all athletes and pick up name badges, etc. and will deliver to the coaches. Your athlete's coach will have the required badge (necessary for participation in the competitions as well as free meals) once registration packets are picked up by the SO Forsyth representative.

When is the first practice?

Practice begins about 8-9 weeks prior to the competitions. Your coach will contact you with the practice time/location.

How are athletes assigned to teams?

If your athlete is wanting to compete on a team level rather than individual skills, s/he must participate in the athlete evaluations which are scheduled prior to practices in order to ensure appropriate placement for your athlete. Dates will be posted on the website and in newsletters. SOGA gives us specific requirements for teams including ages, ability level and number of athletes per team. Evaluations allow us to place athletes on teams that best meet their ability level (and age requirements if possible). If there is not enough for a team, an athlete may be placed on an upper age level team or given other sports options.

What should I expect from the first practice?

You will be asked to provide contact information, uniform sizes and confirmation that the athlete can compete the weekend of the games. Equipment and rules of the game will also be shared.

How do I contact my athlete's coach?

Your athlete's coach will provide you with a contact number. If you are unable to reach him/her, please contact James Parks (jeparks@forsythco.com) or Susan Darlington (sdarlington@forsyth.k12.ga.us) via email or phone.

When is the opening ceremony?

Opening Ceremony is held Friday evening in the Convention Center (see program-given a week prior- for directions and/or changes). At the opening ceremony, you will see the parade of athletes, entertainment and presentation of the torch. The ceremony usually begins around 7 PM. SO Forsyth athletes, families, friends and coaches are encouraged to sit together (when facing the stage, our group will be in the left side stands near the center) and wear SO Forsyth T-shirts.

After the opening ceremony, all athletes, family members and coaches are invited to stay for the dance. Refreshments are provided free of charge.

Will my athlete play Friday?

Athletes who have preliminary rounds are typically assigned to do so on Friday morning/afternoon. Basketball is the most common competition with preliminary rounds. SO Forsyth will not know the official schedule until approximately one week prior to the games. If your athlete needs to be at the games on Friday, school administration will be informed to excuse the absences.

What does my athlete need to bring if staying over night?

For the winter games, athletes stay in hotel rooms close to the games. SOGA assigns 3 athletes and 1 coach/chaperone per room. If you would like to be a chaperone, please inform your coach by completing the volunteer form (www.soforsyth.com/volunteers/our-coaches) by clicking on the volunteer form on our website. This form requires a background check from SOGA and must be turned in prior to state games paperwork due dates. Toiletries, change of clothes, uniform and jacket are recommended. Be sure your coach has your child's emergency and medical information.

When will athletes complete their competitions?

Depending on the competition, the athlete may finish by Saturday afternoon or may need to return Sunday morning. Again, your coach will inform you of the general schedule approximately one week prior to the games.

When will I know my child's assigned schedule?

General schedules are emailed to the Coaches Coordinator 1-2 weeks prior to the games. Coaches will then send the game program to the parents. Individual competition schedules will not be confirmed until the coaches meeting held immediately after the opening ceremony Friday night (around 9:30 – 10 PM). Coaches often call their parents to confirm or to inform them of any changes late Friday night if the athlete is not staying on campus.

Does my athlete need money?

Lunch, Breakfast and Dinner are provided by state sponsors and free of charge. Water is also provided throughout the competitions. However, the timing and location of free meals can interfere with game schedules requiring athletes to obtain meals elsewhere. We have also experienced (at times) that athletes competing on Friday's are not always guaranteed a free meal. Because of this reason, you will need to send money with the athlete. It is best to pack a small cooler with snacks and drinks.

Is there a Family Hotel?

Yes. Coaches are asked to assign a team parent who will be the liaison between Linda Fitzpatrick and any announcements that the athlete parents need to hear regarding state games. Family hotels are announced when housing information is provided to the local coordinators (typically about 2-3 weeks at the latest prior to the games). We try to obtain the family hotel information as quickly as possible and share it with our families. Family hotel expenses are typically about \$99 per night but can fluctuate depending on the location. Contact our family coordinator, Linda Fitzpatrick at lindafso@yahoo.com if you have any questions. Families are not eligible for the free meals provided by the state. Be sure to pack an ice chest with drinks and snacks.

It is also helpful for the team parent to gather the following information and send to Linda Fitzpatrick so that SO Forsyth can plan accordingly:

- 1) Will the athlete need a chaperone or will they be staying with parents who are getting a hotel?
- 2) Does the athlete who needs overnight chaperoning also need transportation to the games?
- 3) Will the athlete who does not need a chaperone only attend the games (not stay over-night)?

Can I attend as a chaperone for my son/daughter?

Room assignments are based upon the number of athletes and coaches. At times, we need more chaperones. If this is the case, we will place you with your son/daughter and at least 1 more athlete. However, chaperones must complete a volunteer form prior to the paperwork deadline: **November 30th**. Go to www.soforsyth.com/volunteers/our-coaches and click on volunteer profile. As a chaperone, you will receive a name badge and access to all meals free of charge. Be sure to indicate your wishes at the first practice by completing the paperwork provided.

Do I need to purchase a uniform for my athlete?

Uniforms are typically delivered during the last week of practice. They are free of charge to the athletes. If your athlete is wearing a men's tank, be sure to have him/her wear a Tshirt or tank underneath if needed. Uniforms are given to athletes on a loan basis. The uniforms can be utilized for almost all events and can be kept as long as the athlete knows s/he will return for the next season's games (i.e. fall, winter, summer). Once the uniform is signed out to the athlete, it can be utilized for multiple events/seasons and can be kept until the athlete no longer chooses to participate – or needs a new size. However, your coach may choose to collect them immediately following the competitions– so be sure to bring clothes to change into if that is the case. If the athlete no longer plans to participate, the athlete should return the uniform to Susan Darlington or to his/her coach. If a uniform is lost, a \$15 fee will be applied (per item) in order to purchase a replacement.

Do I need to provide anything else for the uniform?

Yes. Your athlete will need appropriate shoes and socks (except aquatics), long sleeve T under uniform if necessary. Be sure your athlete has a change of clothes, cover-up, etc. Please check with your coach.

Who provides transportation?

SO Forsyth asks that parents, family members or friends provide transportation to the games. We feel that the competitions are opportunities for families and friends to share moments of joy and triumph with their Special Olympic Athlete. *However, if transportation is not possible for someone in the family or a family member to provide, please speak with the coach the first week of practice.* Transportation between hotels and games is provided by SOGA through their shuttle service.

How will I know where to go for the events?

The program guide provided by your coach will have driving directions as well as specific information about the location for various competitions as well as the opening ceremony. You can also go to the SOGA website at www.specialolympicsga.org for more information.

What should I expect the day of the games?

Your athlete's coach will provide you with a meeting time and place the day of the games. Some competitions may require the athlete to play several rounds throughout the day as teams are eliminated.

To do List Prior to Each Season:

- 1) Check with Michelle Padgett at mpadgett@forsyth.k12.ga.us to make sure your athlete is registered and up to date with the state (participation form). Must be up to date at least 8 weeks prior to the state games.
- 2) Confirm with the coach that your athlete has his/her uniform – new athletes receive uniform from coach and/or give the coach your athlete's uniform size.

- 3) Read instructions and directions to the games ahead of time and confirm meeting place at the games.
- 4) Give your coach your contact information and obtain his/hers as well.
- 5) **Confirm game schedules with your coach – check to see if your athlete will be playing on a Friday as well.**