



## Monthly Coaches Newsletter – January 2018

Sports Highlight: The 2017 State Swim Meet took place on Saturday and Sunday, December 9-10, 2017 at the McCorkle Aquatics Pavilion at The Ohio State University in Columbus. This year celebrated our 46<sup>th</sup> year of the Aquatics Event, each held at OSU! The event featured nearly 500 athletes from across Ohio who competed in 204 divisions over three sessions and 18 separate events. As always, the team relays seem to be the highlight of each day. We also had local media outlets FOX28 and WBNS10TV cover the event and speak with our athletes! Congratulations to all the individual swimmers and teams on their performances! The date to reserve for this year's meet is December 1-2, 2018.



*(Above) State Swim Meet, as seen from high dive platform – Photo Credit: Kate Burdett, SOOH*

Coming Soon: Winter Games—On February 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, Special Olympics Ohio will travel to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Kent State University Ice Rink to host the 2018 Winter Games. The competition will take place from 11am to 6pm on Saturday and 9am to noon on Sunday. There are close to 200 athletes registered for the games! More information on the specific schedule of events next month...

### Coach of the Month: **Brandon Runk, Head Coach Basketball – Fayette County Dragons**

Coach Brandon Runk was nominated by Local Coordinator Tim Stewart. Tim shared that Brandon has been coaching for the Dragons since 2012 and is the current Head Coach for their adult team. Since taking on the role, he has led the Dragons to four state final four appearances. Prior to his arrival, the team had struggled to generate offense and was fortunate to score 20 points a game. More than his ability to generate performance out of his athletes on the court, is the caring he exhibits off the court. Brandon is invested in their success in life and takes the time to get to know each athlete and form bonds which will last a lifetime. He offers advice and holds them accountable, making life lessons a priority and basketball coaching second. Brandon even drives an athlete to work every morning and was instrumental in helping an athlete get out of sheltered workshop and into the general workforce, eventually able to finance his own home and obtain a driver's license. It is for his performance and dedication on and off the court that Special Olympics Ohio recognizes Coach Brandon Runk as the

January 2018 Coach of the Month!! Congratulations Brandon and thank you to Tim for the nomination!!!

*(Please forward me nominations for Coaches within your local organizations which deserve some special recognition. Simply send me a brief narrative of “why they are the best” and a coaching photo to my email address: [jwyssocki@sooh.org](mailto:jwyssocki@sooh.org) and I will take the best of the month and call them out on the monthly newsletter for the difference they are making for our Special Olympics Athletes.)*

**Basketball Season:** *Welcome to the season! A reminder that team rosters are due to the State Office by January 10<sup>th</sup> at Noon!!* I asked last month if local chapters had any Skills Basketball Teams or Skills Unified Basketball Teams which would like to have similar teams to play. I posed the question as there seems to be a gap in the Individual Skills athletes and Division 5 or School Age Division 2 teams which could be filled with some regional matchups for those just learning team play with floor coaches. Thus far I heard from the following areas with skills teams, listed alongside their primary point of contact:

- West Licking – Warriors Skills Team, [sussman@denison.edu](mailto:sussman@denison.edu)
- Rocky River Team Unify (MS/HS), [hanigosky.shannon@rrcs.org](mailto:hanigosky.shannon@rrcs.org)
- Coshocton County Indians, Skills Team, [tcollins@coshdd.org](mailto:tcollins@coshdd.org)
- Licking County – Eagles Skills Team, [lickingcountyspecialolympics@gmail.com](mailto:lickingcountyspecialolympics@gmail.com)

**Certification Corner:** SONA has teamed up with NFHS, ESPN, the NFL Foundation and the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education to bring you the new and improved online course for Unified Sports Coaches. This free one-hour long course is designed to explain Special Olympics Unified Sports and offer guidance on how to become a successful Unified Sports Coach. Hosted by ESPN’s Kevin Negandhi, the course includes historical background, testimonials, tutorials and quizzes to keep the audience engaged from beginning to end. Here is the course link:

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61127/coaching-unified-sports>

**Save the Date(s):** We are planning a couple practical, in-person Special Olympics coaches training opportunities in 2018 based on feedback received from training coordinators throughout the state. A Tennis program coach’s clinic is being planned for Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup> and a Flag Football Clinic on Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, both in central Ohio. If you have interest in attending either or both clinics, please send me an email at [jwyssocki@sooh.org](mailto:jwyssocki@sooh.org) so I can pre-register you and plan the venues accordingly.

**YouTube™ Channel:**

Check out our new Special Olympics Ohio Sports Resources channel on YouTube™, providing some original content and *Playlists* with helpful information categorized by sport. A great resource for coaches and athletes, with more original content coming very soon:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_zwnbh97LkS76kJEY039og](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_zwnbh97LkS76kJEY039og)

**Remember to ALWAYS have your Athlete’s and Partner’s Application for Participation and Release Forms *in your possession* while training, traveling and/or competing. Should a medical event occur, those forms will be necessary for the athlete to receive treatment!**

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*Until next month,*

*Coach John*