

Competition Overview

Special Olympics Florida conducts eight State Championships every year. These events are the culmination of an athletes training and competition cycle for a specific sports season.

In order to compete in a State Championship event, athletes and teams must have completed eight weeks of training and compete at county and area level competitions. [View the state map to locate counties and areas.](#)

Basketball

Over 60 teams compete in three separate statewide tournaments, held annually in February. Teams are divided into age groups and then into one of four ability groups. Teams must play a minimum of 4 games and qualify by winning their ability group at the area level. The three events are conducted at Eglin Air Force Base (Fort Walton Beach), Patrick Air Force Base (Cocoa Beach), and University of South Florida (Tampa). [](#)

Summer Games

Special Olympics Florida's Summer Games are the largest event on the calendar with 1,600 athletes competing in Athletics (Track & Field), Bocce, Cycling, Soccer, Tennis, and Volleyball. This event is held annually at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex and kicks off with an exciting Olympic-style Opening Ceremonies that ends with the inspiring Law Enforcement Torch Run Final Leg and fireworks display. It concludes on Saturday night with Closing Ceremonies and the much anticipated Victory Dance.

Equestrian Sports

Over 100 riders compete in this exciting sport in May in our State Championships at the Bob Thomas Equestrian Center at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa. Athletes compete in a variety of English and Western events giving them the opportunity to show their abilities.

Golf Championships

Orange Lake Resort & Golf Club in Kissimmee is the current host of this championship in September, on their challenging 18-hole layout. Over 150 golfers compete in Individual Skills and 9- and 18-hole events.

Surfing Festival

Currently, 40 athletes are competing in surfing -- a state sport that started in 2010. Surfers from six counties head to Cocoa Beach in September for the annual Surfing Festival, hosted by Ron Jon Surf Shop and managed by Ron Jon Surf School.

Aquatics Championships

Over 300 athletes congregate in North County Regional Park (Indian River County) in October to compete in our annual Championships. Swimmers will compete in a full slate of short and long course events.

Fall Classic

Over 1,200 athletes compete in our State Fall Classic held each year in October/November. Athletes compete in Bowling, Gymnastics, Powerlifting, and Softball. This event is held annually at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex.

Unified Sports® Flag Football Tournament

Our newest Special Olympics Florida sport -- Flag Football -- began in the fall of 2012, with 13 county programs competing in the state tournament.

Volunteering at State Competitions

Volunteers should be 15 years of age or older unless there is a youth group who is accompanied by a sufficient number of adults (who will stay the entire time) for supervisory purposes. Children 10 years old may volunteer if they are a member of a group, and there is an activity at a specific competition that is compatible with their skills. The group must have a sufficient number of chaperones.

At on-site sign-in, all volunteers must show a picture identification.

All volunteers will receive a volunteer T-shirt and lunch.

Special Olympics Florida asserts that the possession or consumption of alcohol or illegal substances at any time during pre-games, games and post-games activities. In addition, smoking or chewing tobacco is prohibited at competition sites.

See the [Calendar of Events](#) to see when and where you can volunteer!

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