



Guidelines for Managing Roster Caps During Sign-Up

Special Olympics Maryland – Montgomery County (SOMO)

While SOMO wants to serve every athlete interested in any sport, we must also manage constraints that can limit participation in any sport. Constraints can include facility limits, a lack of volunteers or coaches, or other factors unique to a sport. When facing such constraints, SOMO sets a roster cap for a sport. Bowling has long had a roster cap. Other sports are nearing their capacity constraints. This policy explains how SOMO allocates limited roster slots to athletes when interest in a sport exceeds a sport's capacity.

- **First Priority:** Family members of a sport's Coaches and Team Manager have first priority for the sport they coach.
- **Second Priority: *One-Sport Athletes***
We have athletes whose disabilities limit them to only one sport each season; their disabilities essentially prevent participation in other sports. This is notably true for some of our bowling athletes. These athletes have no alternative if denied a roster spot for their *one-sport*. Accordingly, such *one-sport* athletes receive second priority for roster spots. At sign-up time, an athlete's medical/waiver status must be current through the end of the season to be considered a One-Sport Athlete.
- **Third Priority: *Single-Sport Athletes***
Athletes who love the sport enough to choose it as their only sport for the season are Single-Sport Athletes. At sign-up time, an athlete's medical/waiver status must be current through the end of the season to be considered a Single-Sport Athlete.
- **Fourth Priority: *Multiple-Sport Athletes***
Athletes who sign-up for multiple sports in a season, where that is allowed under our *Guidelines for Managing Participation in Multiple Sports Within a Season*, have fourth priority. A roster-limited sport can include these athletes after they have reserved roster spots for their One-Sport and Single-Sport athletes. At sign-up time, an athlete's medical/waiver status must be current through the end of the season to be considered a Multiple-Sport Athlete.
- **Fifth Priority: *Out of County Residents***
Special Olympics policy requires that we give priority to athletes that reside in our Area, specifically Montgomery County. Accordingly, athletes who reside in other Areas have fifth priority, so long as their medical/waiver status is current.
- **Last Priority: *Athletes with Medical/Waivers Expiring Before Season End***
Athletes, and their families/caregivers, are responsible for updating their medical/waiver status *before* they sign-up for a sport. Athletes whose medical/waiver status is expired or expires before a sport's season ends receive last priority for roster slots. In practice, when a sport has a roster cap in effect, athletes with expiring medical/waiver status at sign-up time are unlikely to receive a roster spot.



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Tiebreakers: Depending on the level of interest, a roster-limited sport can run out of slots within any of the above priorities. In such cases, sports apply the following tiebreakers within a priority to assign roster slots:

- **First Tiebreaker: Athletes Returning to the Sport**
Athletes returning to a sport receive preference over new athletes within a roster spot priority level
- **Second Tiebreaker: First Signed-Up**
The final tiebreaker is sign-up time. Among athletes who tie on the first tiebreaker, athletes who sign up earlier receive preference over those who sign-up later.

Head Coach Flexibility: It's difficult for a policy to consider all factors across all sports and athlete circumstances. Accordingly, Head Coaches have the authority, on an athlete-by-athlete basis, to make limited exceptions to this policy when assigning roster slots. In such cases, Head Coaches should balance the athlete's contribution to their team against the cost of denying another athlete a roster spot, making the decision that best supports their entire team.