

**Special
Olympics**
South Africa



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Special Olympics South Africa is proud to reveal the National Team that will participate in the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi

From the 5th-7th of April 2018, over 700 athletes and coaches from all 9 provinces came together to participate in the 2018 Special Olympics South Africa National Summer Games which took place at the Wits University Education Campus in Johannesburg. The games began with a dazzling Opening Ceremony at the Linder Auditorium. The ceremony was preceded by a Law Enforcement Torch Run through the streets of Hillbrow; supported by the SAPS, the JMPD and Special Olympics South Africa Ambassadors, Mark Fish (former professional football player), Letshego Zulu (fitness guru), Andre Lotter (7De Laan actor), Soldier Boy Mclellan (EFC athlete) and Desiree Ellis (Banyana Banyana Coach).

The Chairman of Special Olympics South Africa, Dr Mathews Phosa opened the proceedings by saying **"Every single day, our athletes have to fight not only to excel in sport, but to enjoy the basic human rights that you and I take for granted. Every single day they have to prove that ability can overcome a disability. We are so proud of you. Each one of you here tonight represents your province and you will compete over the next two days for the chance to represent South Africa at the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi. We know that those of you that advance will do us proud"**.

He was joined by the Honourable MEC of Sport, Arts and recreation Gauteng, Ms Faith Mazibuko, Major General Kekana of the SAPS and the President and Managing Director of Special Olympics Africa, Mr Charles Nyambe who offered their messages of support to all the provinces present. The evening saw performances by the First Lady of Kwaito, Tamara Dey and artists Gigi Lemayne and Priddy Ugly. The opening was followed by fierce competition in: athletics, equestrian, aquatics, golf, football, futsal, bocce and table tennis saw the advancement of 75 athletes from Northern Cape, Free state, Western Cape, Kwazulu Natal, North west, Gauteng and Mpumalanga that will represent South Africa at the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games. The Games were supported by officials from the South African Football Association, Athletic South Africa, the Professional Golfers Association, the Table Tennis Association of South Africa and the Gauteng Aquatics Association.

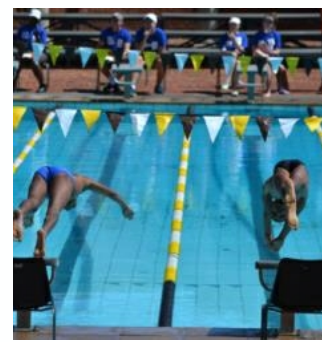
Members of the Italian Club assisted with Bocce and Shumbashaba hosted the equestrian competition. The Games were also supported by the following organizations: Lotto, Aquelle, Sedgars Sport, Gift of the Givers and Wits Sports Department, Helpmekaar Hoerskool, Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club and Shumbashaba. The Special Olympics National Team will travel to Abu Dhabi to represent South Africa at the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games. Over 7000 athletes from 170 countries will be taking part in the 2019 World Games.

All the sporting action from the Special Olympics South Africa National Summer Games

Over 700 SOSA athletes competed in the Bocce, Table Tennis, Futsal, Football, Equestrian, Golf and Swimming during the 2018 Special Olympics South Africa National Summer games. On the first day of the competitions our athletes were taken through divisioning as well as a program on how the rest of the games will operate.

Special Olympics is dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences. Special Olympics Sports unites people with and without intellectual disabilities to feel as if their on the same team. All of this was inspired by a simple principle: **training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.**

We would like to send a huge thank you to the different sporting federations: SAFA, Table Tennis Board, the Italian Bocce Club of Bedford view, Shumba Shaba, Professional Golfers Association of South Africa and Swimming South Africa for sending their referees and officials to come support our athletes and officiate our games.



Athlete Leadership

Special Olympics South Africa believes in empowering the youth, hence we have a powerful Athlete Leader Input Council that represents all of the athletes of Special Olympics SA. Our athletes are always working hard to improve their levels of capabilities. To date, we had 4 athletes from different provinces who came with separate teams as coaches for the National Summer Games. We are indeed proud of you Valentino Vergotino, Eltheo Marmaan, Joyce Ramabusa and Omphemetsi Mocumi for taking the step forward into inclusion and leading by example for all our athletes. We cannot wait to see what the future holds for our hero's.



In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary Special Olympics South Africa supports Inclusion

Throughout history people with intellectual disabilities have suffered from the worst forms of abuse and discrimination – mostly invisible, hidden from view and ridiculed by society, and in some cases, their own families. The world felt more comfortable ignoring the most basic human needs – connection, health and hope for a better life – than acknowledging people with intellectual disabilities as neighbors, let alone as valuable members of society. But one woman altered the course of history and started a revolution to change it all. When Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Special Olympics in 1968 she took a rebellious stand against the injustices faced by people with intellectual disabilities.

No longer would the world turn its back on the most vulnerable among us. Her solution was simple: give people with intellectual disabilities a chance to demonstrate their abilities, determination and value through sport. She faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles and yet never wavered in her steadfast belief that every person deserves to be treated with respect and have an opportunity to be included. Fifty years later, Special Olympics has grown from a summer camp held in Mrs. Shriver's backyard to a global movement reaching more than five million individuals with intellectual disabilities in 170 countries. Despite this amazing feat, there are two hundred million people with intellectual disabilities who continue to face an uphill battle for inclusion. The fight against complacency, ignorance and stigma Mrs. Shriver initiated 50 years ago is still just as critical today.

For some, it is a lack of access to healthcare, for others education, and still others the threat of ongoing discrimination, ridicule, derision and even neglect and abuse. Consider the following statistics:

- People with intellectual disabilities die younger than the general population (average of 13 years earlier for men, 20 years for women) with the majority of the premature deaths due to delays or problems investigating, diagnosing and treating illnesses, and with receiving adequate care.
- Young people with intellectual disabilities are at greater risk for being victimized and bullied. In the US, multiple studies have concluded that children with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be bullied than their peers without disabilities.
- Significant numbers of people feel that inclusion in the work place and school could have negative consequences including more accidents, lower productivity, decreased ability to learn and lack of discipline.

These misperceptions contribute to a major gap between employment rates among the general population and those with disabilities in countries all over the world. According to the US Bureau for Labor Statistics, in 2015 only 17.5% of people with disabilities were employed, compared to 65% of the general population. Today the fight for inclusion is more relevant than ever. People of all ages, races, genders, cultures, backgrounds and abilities continue to face discrimination, ignorance and disparagement. Just as Eunice Kennedy Shriver did in 1968, Special Olympics is setting a stake in the ground and is once again prepared to alter the course of history - this time, with people with intellectual disabilities leading the way.

No longer is it enough to provide a place for people with intellectual disabilities to come together through sport. It is time to demand uncompromising inclusion— in school, employment, healthcare, social activities and yes, sports, too. From the youngest among us to the oldest.

Here we are Fifty years later, Special Olympics has grown from a Summer camp which was held in Mrs. Shriver's backyard to a global movement, reaching more than five million individuals with intellectual disabilities in 170 countries, and this is why we as a programme will continue to support and fight for the right to inclusion for all of our athletes.

More news and events



The annual Unified Rotary event a huge success!

Special Olympics South Africa in partnership with the Rotary Club of Sandton hosted a Unified Sports event on the 19th of May at the Field and Study Recreation Centre. We had a wonderful, successful fun day. We started with a great warm up session of Aerobics to prepare our athletes for the day. Our athletes and volunteers from Redhill High School Interact, Roedeaan School Interact and Crawford Schools Lonehill High took part in various recreational games. It was truly an amazing experience for our athletes and their enthusiasm was inspiring. Our athletes also received an opportunity to be entertained with a magic show just before they closed the games with a tug of war.

This event was a great resemble of what Special Olympics Unified Sports stands for. A special thank you to the interact volunteers from Rhodean, Redhill, Crawford Schools Lonehill High for cheering our athletes to not give up and continue to be brave, your fervour support made this day special for our athletes. Thank you to the Steel wings Motorcycle Club for their constant support and taking their time out to support this event. Lastly we would like to say a huge thank you to the Redhill School Interact Student volunteers for their blanket distribution. It was just so heart-warming seeing our athlete's smiles on their faces when each were gifted with blankets to take home to keep them warm during this winter.



Thank you TOMS!

Special Olympics South Africa did a TOMS shoes distribution during the 2018 National Summer Games, were all nine provinces took a quantity of toms for our athletes in schools and centres. The athletes from the Western Cape Province sent an image with note of thanks, to the SOSA national office to say that they are grateful to TOMS and Special Olympics South Africa for their shoes. We pride ourselves with ensuring that the athletes are well taken care of.

It always gives us great excitement and joy when we see our athletes smile. It really was an amazing experience to see our athlete's faces when they fitted their TOMS shoes. The partnership with TOMS shoes globally has indeed been a huge blessing to us as a programme, because their constant support helps us continue to change the lives of our athletes and their families. Thank you to TOMS shoes for helping us put smiles on the faces of our athletes nationwide.



Special Olympics South Africa athletes Tom Lugg, Andrew White and Konrad Zastrau attend the Special Olympics Golfers test tournament for the build up of the 2019 World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi

Every day and all around the world, our athletes train and strive to achieve their very best. There is no other organisation in the world that has the social, emotional and motivational impact as Special Olympics does. Our athletes were given an opportunity to be a part of the Special Olympics golfers test tournament in Abu Dhabi. They competed to their outmost best and came back victorious in the different levels of divisions that they compete in.

These games were a test event for the build-up of the Special Olympics World Summer Games to be held in Abu Dhabi 2019. We would like to congratulate our athletes on their enormous achievements: Tom Lugg who came 2nd in level 5, Division 1 and Konrad Zastrau who came 2nd in Level 5, Division 2, Andrew White travelled as a coach and guidance for our athletes during these games. This indeed was an amazing experience for our athletes, we would like to thank Special Olympics for making it possible for our athletes to live their dreams.



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