



**Special Olympics**  
Massachusetts

*...For Immediate Release*

## **1,000 Local Special Olympics Athletes Compete in Annual August Tournament**

**Amherst, MA** - Nearly 1,000 athletes and coaches will arrive in the greater Amherst area the weekend of **August 8-10** for the Special Olympics Massachusetts (SOMA) August Tournament.

The August Tournament, an annual sporting event for Special Olympics Massachusetts athletes, draws athletes from across the state to compete in Bocce, Softball, Golf, Cycling and Fishing.

The August Tournament boasts the largest participation of "Unified Partners," an initiative started in Massachusetts that combines equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities as teammates. Today this program is an international initiative in over 120 countries globally. Participating in Unified Sports offers the pair of athletes a chance to form a friendship that otherwise may have never occurred and also encourages equality and inclusion. The August Tournament originally began in 1984 as a Unified Sports Tournament. Today, all sports are offered as traditional and Unified Sports.

"This year Special Olympics worldwide celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a milestone marking the Special Olympics movement and dream of changing the world, one small world at a time. The Unified Partners program is a great example of the successful steps Special Olympics has made in bringing integration and inclusion to those with intellectual disabilities," said Bob Johnson, President of Special Olympics Massachusetts.

The 24<sup>th</sup> annual August Tournament timeline includes:

**Friday, August 8th – Opening Ceremonies and Law Enforcement Torch Run**  
Mullins Center, 8pm

**Saturday and Sunday August 9-10<sup>th</sup>**

Competitions: 9 am. – 2 pm

\*\*All directions at <http://www.specialolympicsma.org/august.php>\*\*

- Bocce: Nonotuck Park - Daley Field Road, Easthampton, MA
- Cycling: Swift River Elementary School Complex - 57 State Street, Belchertown, MA
- Fishing: Quabbin Reservoir - Gate 8, Rte 202, Belchertown, MA
- Golf: Cherry Hill Golf Course - 323 Montague Road, North Amherst, MA
- Softball: Nonotuck Park - Daley Field Road, Easthampton, MA and Williston Northampton School, 19 Payson Avenue, Easthampton, MA

*Amherst-area residents are encouraged to come out and Be A Fan of Special Olympics - admission to every event is free and open to the public.*

### **About Special Olympics Massachusetts**

Special Olympics Massachusetts is a sports training and competition program for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Over 10,000 Special Olympics athletes participate year round with over 126 competitions offered. More information at [www.specialolympicsma.org](http://www.specialolympicsma.org).