

Welcome to Special Olympics Snowshoeing!

PRACTICES: The Hastings Sharks snowshoeing team will practice on Saturday mornings at the Spring Lake Park Reserve, 8395 127th Street East, Hastings MN 55033. Practice dates are:

December 30

January 6, 13, 20 & 27

February 10, 17 & 24 – No practice February 3 - Regional Competition

PRACTICE TIME: Practice will begin at 10:00 AM. Arrive at the parking lot near the playground by 9:45 AM. We will practice for about 90 minutes, depending on the weather. You are welcome to snowshoe with your athlete.

Please dress properly for the weather, including very warm boots, gloves, and a hat. Use the restroom before practice. A restroom is available in the Gathering Center, but not on the trails. Bring a water bottle and a snack if needed.

SNOWSHOEING COMPETITIONS:

Please let the team know if your athlete intends to compete in snowshoeing when you register through Hastings Community Education. Your athlete must compete at the Regional Competition to compete at the State Competition.

REGIONAL COMPETITION: Saturday, February 3rd at Orono Middle School, 800 N Old Crystal Bay Road, Long Lake, MN 55356

STATE COMPETITION: Saturday, February 25, Wild Mountain, 37200 Wild Mountain Road, Taylors Falls, MN 55084

A parent, friend or staff must accompany the athlete to the competitions and make sure they are ready to compete.

Athletes will never be turned away if they are unable to pay the participation fee. Contact Liz Alexander at 651-437-4277 to discuss participation fees. Information is confidential.

Snowshoeing Rules

ATTENDANCE: Please notify Coach Ray Kennedy at (651) 402-8786 if your athlete is unable to attend practice. Two unexcused absences from practice may prevent your athlete from competing in the Special Olympics competition or qualifying for a High School Letter. Athletes, including Unified Partners, must attend practice to compete.

CODE OF CONDUCT: All Hastings Sharks athletes, unified partners and caregivers must agree to follow the Sharks Code of Conduct. Please review the code of conduct with your athlete. A copy is posted on the Sharks registration site. Alcohol, tobacco and/or vaping products are not allowed at practice or competitions by athletes, unified partners, family or staff. Questions? Please contact Lisa Sieben at 12.Hastings.Sharks@gmail.com.

PARTICIPATION FORMS: You will be notified if your athlete needs their **Application for Participation in Special Olympics** form updated or if it is incomplete. All athlete and Unified Partner paperwork must be completed one week prior to the first practice. Athletes or Unified Partners will not be allowed to practice until SOMN confirms that their paperwork is current. Paperwork is not accepted at the first practice. Please make sure you complete the entire form.

UNIFIED PARTNERS: Unified Partners compete alongside Special Olympics athletes. Training together and playing together becomes a quick path to friendship and understanding. Unified Partners must be 8 years or older and should compete at approximately the same level as their athlete. Unified Partners must complete the online **Level 1 training & volunteer application** at SOMN before the first practice. A background check is required if the partner is over 18.

SUPPORT THE COACHES: We are all volunteers! If your athlete isn't participating, step in and help out the coaches. If behavior is an issue, share a strategy with the coaches that will work for your athlete. We encourage you to become a coach.

We need coaches! SOMN has a trained coach to athlete ratio in every sport. Please consider becoming a certified coach. Coaching is very rewarding, and Ray will be happy to help you get started on your certification.

SAFETY: You are responsible for your athlete's safety! **A parent, friend or staff is required to be in the park during all practices.** Be prepared to take your athlete home when practice ends, especially if bad weather forces practice to end early. Athletes must be escorted by an adult/staff when using the restroom at the Schaar's Bluff Gathering Center.

Please leave headphones and electronic devices at home. We want your athlete to be safe at practice and the Sharks are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT: Warm clothing is a must for practice. Dress in layers, including very warm boots, gloves or mittens and a hat. The Sharks will provide snowshoes rented from Dakota County Parks Department for athletes, unified partners and family members to use during the season. All equipment must be returned to the coaches at the end of the State Snowshoe Competition. Athletes will not be allowed to register for the next sport if all items have not been returned.

RESPECT: Dakota County has generously offered their Park and trails to our athletes. Please respect the trails. Do not snowshoe on the groomed cross country ski trails. Enjoy the beauty!