

Special Olympics

Paralympics

Ages

6 years old or older

(usually) 18 years old or older

Selection Process

Random Selection

International qualifier competition or threshold times or other international selection procedures

Philosophy

“Power of sport to help all who participate fulfill their potential”

“Does not exclude any athlete based on qualifying scores [or skills]”

Elite athletes whose stringent training is done with personalized coaches/ training staff for international competitions leading to World Championships and Paralympic Games

Eligible Disabilities

Intellectual Disabilities

Physical, Visual, and Intellectual Disabilities

Types of Competition

Local and International

International only (with some domestic qualifying opportunities)

Frequency of Competition

Local competitions happen year-round World Games happen alternating odd years (since 1977) switching between summer and winter

Accompanies Olympics (winter and summer)

Hosted at the same venues about 2 weeks after Olympics ends

Number of Sports

32 total: 20 Summer, 9 Winter, 3 (not at World Games)

28 total: 22 Summer & 6 Winter

Sports for People with Intellectual Disabilities

All 32 sports

Certain events in: Track & Field, Swimming & Table Tennis

Countries Represented

170

182

First International Competition

Summer 1968 (Chicago, IL, USA)

1960 (Rome, Italy)

Headquarters

Washington D.C., USA

Bonn, Germany