



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 28, 2010

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Special Olympics Maryland Celebrates the 2010 Mid-Summer Classic at St. Mary's College, St. Mary's City
200 SOMD Athletes Hoping for Fair Skies and Following Winds as They Go For Gold This Weekend (July 31 – Aug 1)

Baltimore, MD – This weekend marks the 2010 Special Olympics Maryland Mid-Summer Classic and land-lubbers need not apply! Held July 31 and August 1 at St. Mary's College in St. Mary's City, the Mid-Summer Classic is a true test of skills for the more than 200 Special Olympics Maryland athletes who are preparing to give it their all in sailing, kayaking and volleyball and enjoy a celebratory weekend with their peers.

This much-anticipated two-day competition will host 50 SOMD athletes plus their 50 Unified® partners in sailing, another 90 kayaking athletes and Unified Partners, and four Unified Volleyball teams. The competitors hail from all around the state, plus several teams from Northern Virginia. An additional 150 volunteers, coaches and family members will be on hand to offer competition support, coaching tips or simply be fans.

The Opening Ceremony begins at 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 31, with competition in Levels I, II and III sailing beginning at 1 p.m. and the kayaking events beginning at noon and continuing throughout the day until approximately 6 p.m. The volleyball competition takes place on Saturday only, and is slotted from 12:30 – 6:00 p.m. inside the Athletics and Recreational Center. The kayaking competition will resume at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, where the finals for all races will take place. At 9:00 a.m. boats are all in water again for sailing and the final rounds begin at 10 a.m. The awards presentations and closing ceremony will take place at approximately 2:30 p.m. on Sunday.

In order to qualify for the state-level competition, all participating athletes must have completed a minimum eight-week training period and for the kayaking athletes, also competed in a minimum of two qualifying events.

“The Mid-Summer Classic is just another example of what SOMD athletes are doing every day to exceed

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expectations and break the boundaries of what people believe they can and can't do," said Patricia Fegan, President & CEO of Special Olympics Maryland. "Contrary to popular belief, we are not just a one-day track and field event, nor are we only for children or young adults. But the best way for the general public to find out what we really are all about is to come out to the college and see for themselves all that these determined athletes are accomplishing." All events are open to the public free of charge.

SOMD Kayaking

Kayaking's popularity has proven enduring, as the number of athletes training in this adventure sport has continued to grow since it was officially adopted as a state sport in 2002. Most recently, that includes the addition of Unified races. Competition will be held in the 100 M, 200M and 500 M, with both traditional and Unified competition in the 100 and 500M events.

SOMD Unified® Sailing

Special Olympics Unified Sports pairs SO athletes and non-disabled athletes (called Unified Partners) together for training and competition. Unified Sailing is offered in three (3) ability levels at the competition. In Level I sailing, the SOMD athlete will have responsibility for head sail trim. In Level II, the SOMD athlete controls the helm for 50% of the race. In Level III – the highest level – the SOMD athlete has complete control of the boat and the coach can offer verbal assistance only.

SOMD is a year-round sports organization dedicated to providing quality sports training and competition opportunities to Maryland's children and adults with intellectual disabilities and/or closely related development disabilities. SOMD currently serves 10,000 athletes statewide, and offers 28 sports, all at no cost to the athletes or their families. For more information about SOMD visit www.somd.org or call 410-789-6677.

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