

Tennessee Senior Olympics, Inc. Ambassador Training

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the Tennessee Senior Olympics

I. History of Tennessee Senior Olympics

- Started in 1981- A group of Park and Recreation professionals organized the first event at Montgomery Bell State Park. There were around 300 people from across the state.
- Last summer we celebrated our 30th annual state finals- BlueCross/BlueShield has been a sponsor the entire time.
- State Finals has been in several cities around the state- Memphis, Jackson, Cookeville, and Clarksville
- By late 1980's the event was more sports oriented. 1989 TSO board formed.
- District games were formed based on the 10 area agencies across the state- over the years more Park & Recreation departments and independent coordinators have taken over
- From 1990 until 2004 the State Finals were hosted by Clarksville- We grew from 800 athletes to 1700+
- The event moved to Williamson County in 2005- Our largest event total was 1982 athletes.

II. Current

- a. The TSO mission is to promote healthy lifestyles for seniors through fitness, sports, and an active involvement in life. Our programs contribute to the vision of health
- b. Goals
 - Maintain and improve the health and wellness of Tennessee's senior adults;
 - Provide a competitive athletic, recreational and creative experience for senior adults;
 - Focus attention on the importance of regular physical exercise in every individual's personal plan of health;
 - Provide an opportunity for socialization for senior adults from across the state;
 - Establish a consistent statewide network of District Senior Olympics that culminate in an annual state final.
- b. Sports offered
 - Archery

Badminton
 Basketball (3 on 3, free throw**)
 Bowling
 Cycling
 Field Events
 Golf
 Horseshoes
 Pickleball**
 Racquetball
 Road Race 10K-5K
 Shuffleboard
 Softball
 Swimming
 Table Tennis
 Tennis
 Track Events
 Volleyball

- c. Age groups (doubles, team ages) The Tennessee Senior Olympics age categories are as follows:

75-79	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74
75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95+

Participants will qualify for age divisions according to their age as of December 31 of each year.

*The age group of doubles and teams is determined by the age of the youngest player.

- b. To qualify for the State Finals you must compete in one or our 10 districts. You must play in the exact sport that you wish to compete in at the State. Ex. You cannot bowl in mixed doubles unless you compete in this sport at the district. Bowling Singles does not mean you can add doubles to your list of events at state.
- c. Administrative structure- Our board is made up of 21 people. The board composition includes a representative from each district, park and recreation, district coordinators, sponsors, and host city. 3 part-time staff

IV. **District Structure**

- a. Districts- Chattanooga, East, First, Greater Nashville, Memphis, Northwest, South Central, Southeast, Southwest, & Upper Cumberland.
- b. Districts are held in the spring of each year. All you must do is participate in an event to qualify for the state finals. It must be in the exact sport you wish to participate at state. Ex. Swimming 50 free doesn't qualify you for 100 IM.
- c. You may attend any or all of the 10 districts in the state. Must pay entry fee for each event.

- d. Not all districts offer all 18 sports that are at the state finals. Cycling, Road Races, Racquetball, archery are considered open at the state. Even if they are offered at the district. All other sports not offered at your home district is considered open. EX. GN doesn't offer VB so it is considered an open event.
- e. Forms can be downloaded from our website-as they are available. Under the district tab it also has their past results (if they are sent to us) and contact information.
- f. We are a closed state. This means we only allow residents of TN to participate in our district and state events. The exception to this rule is if you live within 30 miles of the state line. EX. If someone lives in Olive Branch, MS, they are allowed to attend any district in the state and come to the state games.
- g. Total number of participants statewide-3,500- 4,000

V. State Finals

- a. The State Finals moved to Williamson County in 2005. We work closely with the Williamson County Parks & Recreation department. It is a great partnership. They go above and beyond what is expected for this event and the senior athletes. We also work closely with Battle Ground Academy, Maryland Farms YMCA, City of Brentwood & Franklin Parks & Recreation departments, and A-Game sports complex.
- b. Our Host Hotel is the Embassy Suites in Cool Springs. This is a full service hotel with a full breakfast, nightly Manager's specials and plenty of room to socialize with friends. We encourage everyone to consider staying at the Embassy Suites.
- c. We will be in Williamson County through 2013.
- d. There are over 300 volunteers used during the event. They come from many different places. These include: BlueCross/BlueShield, BGA, Americorp, Several different Parks & Rec departments (Chattanooga, Davidson County, Rutherford County, Jackson, and Williamson County) and individuals from the community. This is a massive effort and we appreciate each and every volunteer.

VI. Nationals

- a. Nationals began in 1987.
- b. Member of NSGA-250,000 seniors nationwide
- c. 2011 Houston/2013 Cleveland/2015 Minneapolis
- d. Baton Rouge, LA is where the Nationals have their administrative offices.
- e. They are held every other year. (odd years) Last year was a qualifying year for the 2011 nationals in Houston. It takes a year for all 50 states to qualify their athletes.

- f. Athletes are required to qualify in one of the states to be eligible to attend. Most states are open to any senior that wants to participate.
- g. 1st-4th can go in Archery, badminton, bowling, cycling, horseshoes, racquetball, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis and track & field. (in archery, cycling, swimming & track & field there are minimum performance standards...if these are met it does not matter if you were in the top 4)
- h. 1-3 in basketball, softball, tennis & volleyball
- i. Golf is the only sport that you must meet the minimum performance standard to qualify to go to nationals. These are done by gender & age.