



**Special Olympics**

**Great Britain**

*Year-round sports training and competition for people with learning disabilities*

Contact: [jane.silverman@sogb.org.uk](mailto:jane.silverman@sogb.org.uk) +44 (0)7900278111

Photos available

**Special Olympics Great Britain's  
World Winter Games Ski Team  
meet Olympic Champion Lord Sebastian Coe at the  
Home of London 2012**

**Coe offered best wishes and words of advice as the team represents  
Great Britain vs. 100 Nations at Special Olympics World Winter Games  
in Boise, Idaho February 7-13, 2009.**

**19 January 2009** -- Nearly 30 years ago, Sebastian Coe was honoured to become **Special Olympics Great Britain's (SOGB's) \*\*\*** first Ambassador. Thirty years later, Lord Sebastian Coe was pleased to welcome **SOGB's World Winter Games Ski Team** at the offices of the **London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG)**.

This winter, 3000 athletes from 100 countries will travel to Boise, Idaho to compete at **Special Olympics World Winter Games, 7-13 February 2009**. SOGB is proud to be sending a delegation of ten learning disabled athletes joined by **Minister of Disabled People, Jonathan Shaw MP**.

**Commented Coe**, "Special Olympics and the Olympics have come a long way in the past 3 decades. The games coming to London is an amazing opportunity to inspire athletes of all ability levels. The Olympic spirit enthuses all with the idea that greatness is within everyone's grasp."

Lord Coe warmly greeted the athletes and gave the skiers a 2012 pin badge and T-shirts. After offering some friendly advice and chatting with them about their skiing and other sporting achievements, he graciously posed for photos with the eager athletes.

In exchange, the skiers gave Lord Coe one of their World Games Tea Towels and refrigerator magnet. Before Lord Coe left he said he would love the Team to make a return trip to see him in the summer - and to tell him all about the World Winter Games.

\*\*\* Special Olympics and Paralympics are two separate organisations. Special Olympics Great Britain is recognised as the third member of the Olympic family, providing year-round sports, sports training, and local, regional, national and international competitions for all learning disability levels. Paralympics provides elite-only level sports competition for multi-disabled groups including physical, blind and deaf.

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The team was then escorted for a private look at the 2012 site from the huge balcony of a viewing flat by **Alison Nimmo CBE (Director of Planning and Regeneration for 2012)**. Nimmo pointed out the various venues and the 3,200 people working on the site. The team was awed to learn that by next year there would be more than 10,000 workers on site.

The **SOGB World Winter Games Ski Team** is made up of representatives from 4 of the 19 different SOGB regions: West Midlands, South Eastern, Wales, Lothian. The team members qualified to race on an international stage after achieving some of the top finishes at the SOGB National Championships in Pila, Italy in the Aosta Valley Region of Italy at 1800m last year.

**Contact: Jane Silverman**, National PR Director  
Special Olympics Great Britain +44 (0)7900278111,  
[jane.silverman@sogb.org.uk](mailto:jane.silverman@sogb.org.uk)  
[www.sogb.org.uk](http://www.sogb.org.uk) [www.2009worldgames.org](http://www.2009worldgames.org)

#### EDITORS NOTES:

- 2008 was **Special Olympics Great Britain's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year**. Our Chairman is **Lawrie McMenemy MBE**.
- **Special Olympics** and **Paralympics** are two separate organisations. Special Olympics Great Britain is recognised as the third member of the Olympic family, providing year-round sports, sports training, and local, regional, national and international competitions for all learning disability levels. Paralympics provides elite-only level sports competition for multi-disabled groups including physical, blind and deaf.
- **Special Olympics Great Britain** was established in 1978 and has nearly 8,000 athletes who participate in local sports programmes, and regional, national and international competitions. National Games are held every 4 years (Glasgow 2005, Leicester 2009) alternating between Summer World Games (Shanghai 2007 and Athens 2011) and Winter World Games (Boise Idaho 2009) and then European and International Games.
- In 1988, Special Olympics was recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). It is the only sports organisation authorised by the IOC to use the word 'Olympics' in its title.

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- Special Olympics Great Britain's first sports Ambassador was Olympic Gold Medallist **Sebastian Coe**, now Lord Coe, Chairman of the London Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games. Our current Sports Ambassadors include: England and Portsmouth FC goalkeeper **David James**, British Ski Champion and BBC *Ski Sunday* presenter **Graham Bell**, Olympic Champions **Darren Campbell** and **Katharine Merry**, England Women's Football Coach **Hope Powell**, Tennis legend **Mark Cox**, NBA superstar **John Amaechi** and England Basketball Team Captain **Delme Herriman**, World and Olympic Champion Canoeist **Anna Hemmings**, Extreme Kayaker **Shaun Baker** and SOGB athletes **Georgina Hulme** and **Moira Brown**.
- Special Olympics was founded in 1968 by Eunice Shriver Kennedy, sister of US President John F. Kennedy. The programme originally started out as organised summer camps for people with learning disabilities. Since then, the Special Olympics movement has evolved world-wide to include 160 countries and 2,256,733 athletes. In 20,000 communities around the world for 365 days of the year, Special Olympics provides sports training and athletic competition in 30 Olympic type sports for learning disabled children and adults from age 8 to 80 with an IQ of 75 or less.
- Special Olympics Great Britain is a registered charity and is generously supported annually by individual and corporate donations and receives no government funding. Special Olympics GB's Official Partner is National Grid Plc. Its current Premier Partners & Sponsors are the Coca-Cola Youth Foundation, FlipFlop, ABB, SAS, Dominos Pizza, The Geoff & Fiona Squire Foundation, and Lions International.
- One of the guiding principles of Special Olympics is that anyone, with encouragement, support and access to resources, can be provided with a positive sporting experience, raising their self-esteem and the expectations of the community around them. Special Olympics seeks to focus on a persons abilities and qualities giving them opportunities to develop further.

[www.sogb.org.uk](http://www.sogb.org.uk)

*30th Anniversary*  
1978 - 2008



Corinthian House, 1st Floor,  
6-8 Great Eastern Street, London EC2A 3NT  
Telephone: 0207 247 8891  
Fax: 0207 247 2393  
E-mail: [info@sogb.org.uk](mailto:info@sogb.org.uk)  
Web: [www.sogb.org.uk](http://www.sogb.org.uk)

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