



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
WORLD WINTER GAMES
AUSTRIA 2017
Graz | Schladming | Ramsau | Styria

Heartbeat for the world

February 23, 2017

Video – “I’m going to Austria”: <https://vimeo.com/204046676>

ESPN’s Groundbreaking Coverage of Special Olympics World Winter Games Begins March 19 From Austria

- **ESPN’s first World Winter Games coverage includes live three-hour Opening Ceremony featuring Parade of Athletes, Special Guests and musical performances from Grammy Award-Winner Jason Mraz and Grace VanderWaal**
- **Robin Roberts, Kevin Negandhi, Lindsay Czarniak and Dustin Plunkett to host coverage from Graz, Schladming-Rohrmoos and Ramsau**
- **Nightly *Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017* program to bring viewers stories, competition showcase, interviews and more throughout the Games**
- **Coverage also includes: Extensive news, video and information on ESPN.com, ESPN App; Vignette Series across ESPN platforms**

ESPN’s global coverage of the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria, the largest sporting and humanitarian event in 2017, will begin March 19 -- just under a month away -- with a live three-hour special capturing the inspiration, pageantry, performances and special guests of the World Winter Games Opening Ceremony. It marks the first-ever live coverage of the World Winter Games.

From Monday, March 20 through Monday, March 27 a daily program – *Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017* – will bring viewers the stories, competition showcase, interviews and more from Austria.

“Special Olympics reflects all the very best aspects of sports – its power to inspire, forge bonds, build confidence and impact lives,” said Russell Wolff, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, ESPN International. “As storytellers and sports lovers, the World Winter Games represents an incredible opportunity for ESPN to showcase amazing stories of perseverance, strength, acceptance and inclusion to a global audience. These are remarkable athletes and we’re extraordinarily excited to tell their stories around the world.”

As an official broadcaster of the Special Olympics World Winter Games, ESPN’s coverage will be carried on ESPN2 in Australia and New Zealand as well as streamed on WatchESPN (full schedule below).

“Thanks to our partner ESPN and their unprecedented coverage for a World Winter Games, in less than a month, millions of people will be able to tune in and watch 2,700 athletes from 107 nations around the world compete and share their stories of courage, determination and achievement,” said Mary Davis, CEO, Special Olympics. “ESPN’s reach and expertise in storytelling gives us the tremendous opportunity to share how the power of sports and inclusion transforms lives and changes perceptions that exist for people with intellectual disabilities – one of the most marginalized populations in the world.”

ESPN’s coverage will also be carried in 190 countries and territories around the world, including on ESPN television and streaming channels in Latin America, Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, TSN in Canada, SONY ESPN in India, ESPN on BT Sport in the UK and Ireland, Tencent digital platforms in China (through ESPN’s long-term collaboration with Tencent) and the ESPN Player streaming service in Europe. Additionally, through syndication, ESPN coverage will appear in dozens of countries and territories. It marks the broadest-reaching coverage ever for a Special Olympics World Winter Games.

Transcending the boundaries of geography, nationality, gender, age, politics, culture and religion, the Special Olympics World Winter Games will bring together more than 2,700 athletes and 1,000 coaches representing 107 countries, along with 10,000 volunteers and thousands of spectators, all in celebration of inclusion and the power of sport. Athletes will compete in Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Floor Hockey, Floorball, Snowboarding, Snowshoeing, and Stick Shooting at venues in Schladming-Rohrmoos, Graz and Ramsau, Austria.

Toyota will again be a sponsor of ESPN's coverage, as it was for the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games coverage.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD WINTER GAMES: OPENING CEREMONY AND NIGHTLY COVERAGE

ESPN's coverage of the World Winter Games Opening Ceremony will mark the first-ever complete, live coverage of the star-studded spectacle and will be hosted by *Good Morning America's* **Robin Roberts**, ESPN's **Lindsey Czarniak** and **Kevin Negandhi** and ESPN contributor and Special Olympics Global Messenger **Dustin Plunkett**. ESPN's **Marty Smith** will be with the U.S. delegation for the Opening Ceremony, providing reports throughout.

ESPN's coverage will be live from the Planai Stadium in Schladming-Rohrmoos and will bring viewers the Parade of Athletes, the lighting of the Special Olympics Cauldron, as well as capture performances by Grammy Award-winning musician **Jason Mraz**, as well as 13-year-old winner of *America's Got Talent*, **Grace VanderWaal**. It will also feature appearances by **Princess Charlene of Monaco**, **Apolo Ohno**, **Hannah Teter**, **Dikembe Mutumbo**, **Michele Kwan**, **Sam Perkins** and others.

ESPN's nightly show – **Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017** - will be produced from on site in Schladming-Rohrmoos, Austria with direct connectivity to ESPN's Bristol headquarters. Each night, it will also include interviews, features, special guests, a daily "competition showcase" segment, reporting from ESPN's **Jen Lada**, **Victoria Arlen** and **Smith**.

Throughout both the Opening Ceremony coverage and its nightly show ESPN will tell the remarkable and inspiring individual stories of athletes, coaches and families from around the world in "*Up Close and Personal*" features. "*Up Close and Personal*" segments were first made famous by the legendary **Roone Arledge** at ABC Sports and returned to television (for the first time since 1988) with ESPN's coverage of the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Los Angeles.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD WINTER GAMES: ESPN DIGITAL MEDIA

ESPN's global digital platforms – the world's leading portfolio of digital sports properties in the world, including local editions of ESPN.com and the ESPN App, streaming platforms and more – will offer extensive coverage in the build-up to, and throughout, the World Winter Games.

ESPN streaming services around the world will carry the coverage of the World Winter Games, including the Watch ESPN in the US, Brazil, ESPN Play throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, and ESPN Player in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

With news, long-form feature storytelling, video, exclusive blogs from athletes, coaches and volunteers, photo galleries and more, ESPN will examine the people and topics of the Special Olympics movement. ESPN's **Melissa Isaacson** and **Alyssa Roenigk** will lead the reporting from on site in Austria with ESPN's editorial teams from all over the globe contributing to the coverage.

ESPN ANZ Schedule: ESPN's Coverage of Special Olympics World Winter Games Austria

NOTE: All shows will also be simulcast on WatchESPN

<u>Day/Date</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Time (ET)</u>	<u>Network</u>
Sun., March 19	Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017 Opening Ceremony	8am-11am LIVE 5am	ESPN2 WatchESPN
Mon., March 20	<i>Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017</i>	9am-10am	ESPN2

Tues., March 21	<i>Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017</i>	9am-10am	ESPN2
Wed., March 22	<i>Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017</i>	9am-10am	ESPN2
Thurs., March 23	<i>Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017</i>	9am-10am	ESPN2
Fri., March 24	<i>Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017</i>	9am-10am	ESPN2
Sat., March 25	<i>Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017</i>	9am-10am	ESPN2
Mon., March 27	<i>Special Olympics World Winter Games 2017</i>	5am-6am	ESPN2

ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD WINTER GAMES AUSTRIA 2017

Every two years, Special Olympics holds its flagship event, the World Games, demonstrating sports excellence, which promotes equality, respect and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities around the world. Transcending the boundaries of geography, nationality, political philosophy, gender, age, culture and religion, the world will come together to celebrate inclusion around the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Graz, Schladming-Rohrmoos and Ramsau, Austria 19 March – 27 March 2017. More than 2,700 athletes and 1,000 coaches representing 107 countries, along with 10,000 volunteers and thousands more spectators, will participate in and watch exciting sports and community events. This is the second time Austria has hosted the World Winter Games, having also staged the event in 1993. Sports featured are Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Floor Hockey, Floorball, Snowboarding, Snowshoeing, and Stick Shooting. For more information on the 2017 Special Olympics World Games, including volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, visit www.austria2017.org and on social on [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

ESPN AND SPECIAL OLYMPICS

ESPN is proud of its relationship with Special Olympics, which spans more than 31 years and over the past three years, ESPN has continued to deepen its relationship with the Special Olympics movement.

Earlier this year, ESPN and Special Olympics committed to continuing their alliance to use the power of sports to promote social inclusion and acceptance by reaching two agreements: [an extension, and expansion, of ESPN's Global Presenting Sponsorship of Special Olympics Unified Sports®](#) and a new, three-year global programming agreement.

The new \$1.5 million grant supports Special Olympics Unified Sports, as well as other initiatives, and extends and expands a role ESPN has held since 2013. Dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences, Special Olympics Unified Sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. With support from ESPN and others, Special Olympics has [grown this innovative and inclusive program to more than 1.2 million participants](#). As part of the continued support of Unified Sports, ESPN will invest in Special Olympics' goal to build Unified Sports programming and resources in 10,000 schools by 2020 and ensuring 100,000 coaches receive new/renewed sports certifications by 2020.

ESPN's global Special Olympics programming agreement means ESPN is not only an Official Broadcaster of the 2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Austria, but also the Official Broadcaster of the 2018 Special Olympics USA Games in Seattle, and the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games. ESPN is also adding more news and feature coverage of other Special Olympics events, athletes and stories over the course of the three-year agreement

ESPN believes that, at its very best, sports uplifts the human spirit. Its corporate citizenship programs use the power of sport to positively address society's most pressing needs through strategic community investments, cause marketing programs, collaboration with sports organizations and employee volunteerism, while also utilizing its diverse media assets. For more information go to www.espn.com/citizenship.