

Brenden Cannon

*Special
Olympics
Illinois*



Sport: Powerlifting
Hometown: Chicago, IL

1. How long have you been with Special Olympics?

I have coached every sport Special Olympics Illinois offers through 15 years of experience. I have worked directly as a staff member with Special Olympics Illinois for 10 years. Powerlifting, basketball, and volleyball are my expertise.

2. How has Special Olympics changed your life?

Special Olympics has introduced me some of the most amazing people I have ever met. Athletes, families, coaches, and volunteers have all become part of my life and have impacted me in numerous positive ways. It wasn't until I came to Special Olympics that I found my true passion in powerlifting. This sport alone with the support of the Special Olympics athletes and coaches has made my life tremendously better in all aspects.

3. What has been your biggest obstacle to overcome?

My biggest obstacle was recovery from a surgery I had years back when I broke my ankle. I had a plate and screws put in. The doctor noted I may never be able to run or jump again after the surgery was completed. With the assistance and support of my amazing physical therapist, I not only gained back my full flexibility and motion, I improved my speed and agility from before the surgery. I am beyond thankful for all the support I received from my family, friends, and PT to get back to my normal schedule in life.

4. What makes you most proud?

Being a dad. I have an amazing seven-year-old daughter, Dylan, who is my everything. I also have a five year old step-son, Brady. Being a part of both of their lives makes everything I do worth it. I learned a great deal of how to be a parent from my parents, and I am very proud they did all they did to ensure I could be a part of many opportunities such as this.

5. What are some other accomplishments you are proud of?

I owe all my knowledge and growth in the sport of powerlifting to the Special Olympics athletes and coaches. They encouraged me to learn, study, and keep pushing myself to reach my personal bests. I began with minimal skills and education in the sport, and now today I am a go-to for training and information. It is an accomplishment that was very well outside of my comfort zone years ago and now is something I take part in every day.



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USA GAMES
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6. What other interests or hobbies do you have?

I enjoy comedy in all forms: movies, shows, stand up. Family and friends are extremely important to me. I love taking the kids out anywhere to enjoy themselves, spending time with my fantastic fiancé, and hanging out with our two dogs. I love food and finding new restaurants to check out. Basketball is my favorite sport and I am a die-hard Bulls fan since I was kid.

7. Who do you admire most and why?

I admire my parents the most. They have done everything to raise me in a loving environment and are two of my best friends. I also admire my fiancé. She is a very strong and independent woman who is confident in everything she does. She's the best partner I can ask for.

8. What does attending USA Games mean to you?

Attending USA Games is a complete honor. The Special Olympics athletes are hands down the most courageous and determined individuals I have ever had the pleasure to see and work with. I will do everything I can to ensure I can assist them to succeed.

Being in an atmosphere where EVERYONE is accepted as equals will be the highlight of the trip.

9. How are you preparing/training for USA Games?

Five to six days a week I train at gyms and focus on the lifts in powerlifting. I continuously study new tips and educate myself on the sport in numerous ways. I will take all of my knowledge, expertise, and coaching techniques directly into practicing with the athletes to ensure they are able to perform at their best.

10. Have you been to a World Games or USA Games before?

I was an assistant staff member for the USA Games in Seattle. I was able to coach with the powerlifting team and I directly coached an athlete I have been working with for years.

11. Are you employed? If so, where at and what's your role?

I am the Assistant Senior Director for Region D at Special Olympics Illinois. I am based in our Chicago office and oversee all aspects in the city.

12. Are you a currently a student? If so, where and is it a Unified Champion School?

I am not a student.

