

Matthew Gorski

*Special
Olympics
Illinois*



Sport: Athletics
Hometown: Chicago, IL
Age: 21

1. How long have you been with Special Olympics?

I have been involved with Special Olympics since joining as a freshman in high school in 2016. My first sport was Alpine skiing and it continues to be one of my favorites. I also like to compete in athletics, basketball, bocce, flag football, floor hockey, powerlifting, snowshoeing, soccer, softball, swimming, and volleyball.

I have been a Global Messenger for Special Olympics Illinois since 2019 and served on the planning board for the 2020 Virtual Summer Games Committee. In Chicago, I am part of the Athlete Leadership Committee and have helped to host Zoom dance parties for my fellow athletes during COVID-19. Most recently, I participated in the Plane Pull at O'Hare Airport.

2. How has Special Olympics changed your life?

Special Olympics has changed my life by giving me the opportunity to be included in things and allowing me to make an impact on the world in a positive way. I feel as a person with a disability that I get more respect and feel a part of a family when I'm around my Special Olympics teammates

3. What has been your biggest obstacle to overcome?

I think the biggest obstacle I've overcome is learning patience. I've learned that you can't always do well on your first attempt and it takes a lot of practice to become good at something. I learned that you can't get mad when it doesn't go the way you had hoped.

In grade school, sports were an obstacle for me because I felt like I didn't really belong and I was bullied. I am a good person who is kind to others. I am a team player. Special Olympics has taught me that you're not going to win every time you go out there, but you should be proud of what you have and what you can do. Do the best that you can and hope for the best results.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS
USA GAMES
ORLANDO 2022

4. What makes you most proud?

I am proud of myself for going to and doing well in college and being able to adapt to virtual classes unexpectedly last year. I've learned to do a better job of keeping track of things and can see a difference in how I manage my time compared to just a few years ago.

What makes me most proud is that I'm representing my county as a person that doesn't get represented or respected that much. Special Olympics gives me a chance to feel proud of my accomplishments and successes. I feel very proud of how far I've come despite the challenges I've faced. I feel that I belong

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

I attend Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) full-time where I am a third year student studying to become a high school history teacher. I have received the "Model Student Award," "Outstanding First Year Experience Student Award," and a participation scholarship from TRIO.

In high school, I was on the track and field and cross country teams. I was also on the boys swim team where I earned a "letter."

6. What other interests or hobbies do you have?

I am a petitioning member of APO, which is a service-oriented fraternity. Through APO, I've volunteered at schools and helped to raise money for various shelters. In my free time, I enjoy reading non-fiction books about history, riding my bike, and playing with my dog, Buddy.

7. Who do you admire most and why?

I admire my high school teachers and my coaches because they have a lot of patience while training and teaching their students and athletes. They give them a chance to improve themselves without getting mad.

8. What does attending USA Games mean to you?

It makes me feel included by doing the same sports that everyone else would do, despite having a disability. Attending the USA Games makes me feel very proud of what I do in Special Olympics and I feel honored to represent others with disabilities. I am looking forward to meeting other athletes from around the country, and of course, I look forward to heading to Disney World!

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

Besides walking every day, I stay active by riding my bike and competing in other Special Olympics sports. I will start running more regularly to practice my form and work on my time.

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

None

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

Currently, I work at CAN-TV once per month as a Special Olympics team member, learning how to work the cameras and audio and as an occasional on-camera speaker.

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

I attend Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) full-time where I am a third year student studying to become a high school history teacher. It's not a Unified Champion School but it would be awesome if it were!

