



Sport: Flag Football
Hometown: Naperville, IL
Age: 24

1. How long have you been with Special Olympics?

Ryan started Special Olympics Illinois in 2005 when he was 8 years old, playing basketball. To date, Ryan has competed in basketball, swimming, track and field, softball, flag football, soccer, Unified soccer, and floor hockey.

2. How has Special Olympics changed your life?

Special Olympics has given me the opportunity to be part of a team and play any sport I want to. I have made a lot of friends.

3. What has been your biggest obstacle to overcome?

When Ryan was 16, he had a spinal fusion to correct his scoliosis. Ryan was not able to play sports for six months during his recovery. It was difficult for him to not be active.

4. What makes you most proud?

I'm proud of doing my best and winning medals.

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

Ryan has qualified for SOILL state tournaments for basketball, swimming, flag football, floor hockey, track and field, and Unified soccer. Ryan is very proud of his large collection of medals.

6. What other interests or hobbies do you have?

Ryan is a huge sports fan. He loves watching and attending sporting events at the high school he attended along with various colleges and Chicago professional teams. You can always find him wearing his favorite teams' jerseys. Ryan enjoys attending various activities through Western DuPage Special Recreation.



7. Who do you admire most and why?

Ryan admires his older sister, Sarah, and his younger brother, Mark. Both siblings played Division 1 sports in college. Sarah played softball at Butler University and Mark is currently the quarterback on South Dakota State’s football team. While both of them are Ryan's biggest fans, Ryan is their biggest fan. His energy and school spirit is infectious and many times is referred to as the team mascot leading the crowd in chants. Last season, his brother Mark helped lead his football team to their first FCS National Championship appearance in Frisco, TX, which Ryan attended. Mark has always talked about Ryan's unconditional love and support in press conferences. Chicago NBC did a segment on their unique bond last spring.

8. What does attending USA Games mean to you?

Ryan is excited to be asked to play flag football for Team Illinois with two of his friends from DVSA. Ryan looks forward to playing at Walt Disney World/Wide World of Sports and wants to win a medal. His younger brother Mark played there for the Pop Warner National Football Championship in 2015 and now Ryan gets the same opportunity for Special Olympics USA Games.

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

Currently, Ryan is practicing with his SOILL flag football team, DVSA (DuPage Valley Special Athletes).

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

He has not participated in either.

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

Ryan works at BluCo Corporation in Naperville, IL on their Supported Employment Team. He is responsible for small assembly of parts, small engine operation, organizing parts and boxes, inventory, and counting parts, cleaning and special projects.

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

No

