

# Special Paws Championships

## **SPECIAL PAWS GYMNASTICS CHAMPIONSHIPS** February

**WHEN:** February 6-8, 2026

**WHERE:** Georgia World Congress Center – Atlanta, Georgia

**WHAT:** An open gymnastics competition for athletes with disabilities and unified partners.

**LOCAL HOSTS:** Paws for a Cause Invitational  
Chattooga Gymnastics, Special Olympics Georgia, and Cobb County  
Special Olympics Gymnastics Team

**EVENTS:** Rhythmic Gymnastics (Individual, Group, Unified) Artistic  
Gymnastics (Men, Women, Unified)  
NOTE – Men will compete 4 events: Floor, Vault, Pommel Horse & High Bar per AAU 4X4 rules

**COMPETITION DIRECTOR:** Cindy Bickman [cbickman@earthlink.net](mailto:cbickman@earthlink.net)

**SANCTIONED BY:** USA Gymnastics, AAU, and Special Olympics North America

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- All HUGS Artistic and HUGS Rhythmic competitors must have a current USA Gymnastics athlete membership.
- Coaches with athletes competing in HUGS events must have a USA Gymnastics Professional Membership.
- AAU Special Stars competitors must have a current AAU membership.
- Coaches with athletes competing in Special Stars events must have an AAU membership.
- Special Olympics competitors must have a current medical and release on file with their Program office (local/state/provincial/national). Unified partners are required to have the same membership/documentation, as their special needs partner.
- Coaches for Special Olympics disciplines must submit a signed confirmation letter from the program office with each entry.

### **COMPETITION FORMAT:**

RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS – Athletes have 2 choices for competition: Special Olympics & USA Gymnastics HUGS. Rules for competition & awards will follow either Special Olympics or HUGS guidelines. Coaches should enter athletes on the appropriate Entry Form for either SO or HUGS. Separate sessions will be run for each. Unified is offered for all levels.

- MEN'S & WOMEN'S ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS – Male athletes have 2 choices for competition: Special Olympics & USA Gymnastics HUGS. Rules for competition & awards will follow either Special Olympics or HUGS guidelines. Female athletes have 3 choices for competition: Special Olympics, USA Gymnastics HUGS and AAU Special Stars. Coaches should enter athletes on the appropriate Entry Form for either SO, HUGS or AAU. Separate sessions will be run for each. Unified is offered for all levels. NOTE: BOYS EQUIPMENT IS NOT AVAILABLE. Boys will compete pommel horse using the balance beam & high bar on women's uneven bars.
- GALA – During the competition on Saturday, February 8, all teams are invited to perform an exhibition routine in the Gala (3 minute maximum). The Gala will be held on the rhythmic floor, so artistic equipment will not be available.

**ENTRIES:** Entry forms are available on the Paws for a Cause website.  
<https://www.paws4acauseinvitational.com>

- Athletes may enter two disciplines (Rhythmic, Artistic)
- Entry fee: \$95 for one discipline, \$120 for two disciplines
- Entry deadline: December 31, 2025

NON-US CITIZEN HUGS COMPETITORS AND COACHES – Please complete the [Foreign Athletes, Coaches and Judges form linked here](#) and return with your meet entry form. All fees will be waived.

**GIFT:** To commemorate the Special Paws Championships, all competitors & coaches will receive a special gift.

**HOST HOTEL & TRANSPORTATION:** Information is available on the Paws for a Cause website.

For more information contact Cindy Bickman at [cbickman@earthlink.net](mailto:cbickman@earthlink.net)