

Opening Ceremonies

An opening ceremony gives the event a sense of occasion but it does not have to be extravagant or very formal.

The table below shows the layout that an opening ceremony should take. It also notes with a tick (✓) the minimum components to be included for a local (**L**), regional (**R**) and national (**N**) level of Special Olympics GB event.

Where possible an opening ceremony should be led by a master of ceremonies (MC) using a microphone so that everyone attending the ceremony can clearly hear what is being said.

L	R	N	Component
✓	✓	✓	MC to welcome everyone to the opening ceremony and the event itself
		✓	Parade of athletes in alphabetic order by club/region ¹ accompanied by music if possible
		✓	Entrance of Special Olympics flag (carrier by four athletes) accompanied by music if possible ²
		✓	Raising of the Special Olympics flag ³
		✓	MC to introduce a Special Olympics representative to do a welcome speech
		✓	Welcome speech by Special Olympics representative
			Entertainment
			MC to introduce a guest for a short speech ⁴
			Short speech by a guest
		✓	MC to introduce the pre chosen athlete(s), coach and official to recite the Special Olympics oaths
✓	✓	✓	Special Olympics Athletes oath recited
		✓	Special Olympics Coaches oath recited
		✓	Special Olympics Officials oath recited
			Entertainment
			MC to introduce the Special Olympics Torch
			Special Olympics Torch to enter
			Caldron lit from Special Olympics Torch (The Flame of Hope)
		✓	MC to introduce a guest (e.g. local representative such as the Mayor) or the event manager to declare the event open
✓	✓	✓	Guest/event manager says " <i>I declare the insert name of event open</i> "
		✓	MC to thank everyone for gathering and give out any last minute information

¹ Signs should be made up to be carried in at the front of each club/region. This should note the club/region that the entering team are from. Volunteers can carry these signs or if there are no signs, they can lead the team into the opening ceremony. All teams should end up facing the audience.

² For a local/regional event, the flag should be of the host Special Olympics club/region. For a national event, the flag must be the Special Olympics GB flag.

³ If there is no flag pole, the flag can be laid over a table or hung from a balcony etc.

⁴ All speeches should be checked by the Event Manager prior to the opening ceremony to ensure the correct terminology is in use i.e. the speech does **not** refer to athletes as Olympians