2022 Special Olympics USA Games uses Smartsheet to easily manage hundreds of events for thousands of athletes and coaches

The Special Olympics USA Games, held every four years, will unite thousands of athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean. The USA Games will feature 19 competitive sports, including swimming, bicycling, basketball, running, golf, gymnastics, and soccer.

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Lonnie Snyder, Chief Information Officer,
2022 Special Olympics USA Games

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
USA GAMES
ORLANDO 2022**

Customer:
2022 Special Olympics USA Games

Industry:
Nonprofit

Organization Size:
Medium (50-999 employees)

Region:
North America

Website:
2022specialolympicsusagames.org

Every four years, thousands of athletes gather to compete in swimming, running, golf, and other sports during the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games. Special Olympics, the world's largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, provides year-round training and activities for 5 million participants in 172 countries. This year's USA Games, held in Orlando, Florida, will feature more than 5,500 athletes and coaches from all 50 states and the Caribbean, competing in hundreds of events at dozens of venues.

Background

Technology plays a central role in the USA Games' success, led by Smartsheet. The organization uses Smartsheet to manage participant and volunteer schedules and give athletes, coaches, and spectators better visibility into all events. *"We are going to be the most technologically advanced USA Games ever, and the work we do in Smartsheet is helping us touch every constituent group to better enable the business,"* says Lonnie Snyder, chief information officer for the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games.

The 2022 Special Olympics USA Games did not always have an efficient way to manage schedules and events. *"We never had a playbook or planning guide. Contractors and consultants had their own tools, such as email and spreadsheets, with no cohesive way to track everything,"* says Snyder. *"To properly manage such a massive event, it was imperative that we start organizing our work so everyone could be on the same page and move in the same direction."*

Solution

Snyder encouraged the organization to adopt Smartsheet as a way to increase efficiency and visibility. "I had used Smartsheet before, and I knew it was an innovative tool that was easy to adopt," he says. *"I saw how Smartsheet could simplify project management and reframe how we collaborate and find information in a central place."*

The 2022 Special Olympics USA Games started its Smartsheet journey by creating project plans for more than 70 internal projects. *"The list of projects became a map, where people could just click on a project and find links to individual workspaces with more detailed information for each team*

Customer:

The organization then built a public portal for Heads of Delegation (HODs), responsible for each of the 64 delegations attending the games.

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leader," says Snyder. *"It quickly became our hub for everything."* The organization then built a public portal for Heads of Delegation (HODs), responsible for each of the 64 delegations attending the games. *"Each HOD needs to view upcoming milestones and deadlines, and things like webinars and contact information,"* says Snyder. *"This information is all in one place now in Smartsheet."*

The 2022 Special Olympics USA Games also built operations dashboards in Smartsheet to give organizational leaders detailed snapshots of schedules, equipment deliveries, accommodations, technology, transportation, and volunteer coordination. Each sport's leader uses the Smartsheet mobile app to quickly view the information they need. *"Whether it's a particular sport operational dashboard or a venue operations director dashboard, all our leaders can access real-time data in Smartsheet to more efficiently do their work and streamline the planning of the Games,"* says Snyder. The organization relies on Smartsheet automated workflows to receive alerts and notifications when project or calendar data is submitted via each portal or dashboard.

Additionally, the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games uses DataMesh, a Smartsheet tool that maps data between large sheets and reports to give internal teams and outside vendors an easy way to track event-specific details. *"We have a complex master equipment list and requirements gathering process, and DataMesh streamlines it so we can easily see everything that's needed for a particular venue or event,"* Snyder says. *"Now, we have a drop-down list of things to choose from, including furniture or equipment types, medical supplies, or other categories. When it's time for procurement, a vendor only sees the equipment or supplies they're responsible for without worrying about touching the source data."*

An easier way to manage a complex 7-day event

Using Smartsheet, the 2022 Olympics USA Games gives people updated event details on their mobile devices, helping simplify the management of such a

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In a Nutshell:
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Lonnie Snyder

complex week-long competition. *"Smartsheet gives us a central place everyone can refer to for the latest project or event details, and helps us quickly solve any problems that arise,"* says Snyder. *"When something comes up, it no longer requires a bunch of phone calls or emails to find the right person. Finding that person only requires a quick glance at a dashboard in Smartsheet."* Now, instead of sifting through dozens of emails, delegation heads can rely on Smartsheet workflows to alert them to scheduling changes or updates.

Smartsheet also enables the organization to quickly respond to leadership requests. *"With Smartsheet, when you get asked a tough question by the CEO, you can literally pull up the answer in seconds,"* says Snyder. For example, budget data is constantly updated and available through special budget dashboards. *"Because the information is in a central workspace, anyone can see which budget is approved at any time,"* Snyder says. *"This helps us avoid surprises during meetings."*

Projected cost savings of more than $200,000

The 2022 Special Olympics USA Games is avoiding costs because of the efficiency enabled by Smartsheet. *"Without the delegation head portal in Smartsheet, we would have needed at least three more fulltime employees to manage all the data and requests coming in every day,"* says Snyder. *"Avoiding the need to hire more people saves us $200,000 a year easily."*

The organization also saves time by helping people more quickly find the information they need. *"We get up to 10 requests a week from teams, vendors, or families for updated schedule or event information. In my previous position, finding answers to those requests would sometimes take up to a week. Now, we can find all the information people need in under a few hours,"* says Snyder.

A simplified tool for event tracking

Because Smartsheet is a low-code solution, 2022 Special Olympics USA Games team members spent

In addition, the 2022 Special Olympics USA Games has integrated Smartsheet with its new fan engagement mobile app, which gives athletes and fans a way to create and view game schedules, find venue locations and distances, look up fellow athletes and coaches, and send cheer-on messages.

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Lonnie Snyder

little time adopting it and taking advantage of its features. *"Regardless of what type of computer or operating system they have, people have found it very easy to use,"* says Snyder. *"Even something like creating a web form and dragging fields around is easy to pick up, minutes after learning how. We've had people here become power users in a few weeks, using advanced formulas, summary fields, and other features soon after adopting Smartsheet."*

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A smooth transition to the 2026 games

The 2022 Special Olympics USA Games is building on its Smartsheet adoption to transition smoothly to the 2026 Games in Minnesota. Snyder will serve as Chief Technology and Information Officer for those games. *"We plan to simply transition the account, so the next leadership team has everything they need in Smartsheet for a successful 2026 Games,"* Snyder says. *"They won't have to do complex programming or use another content management system. They'll just need to update sheets in Smartsheet and get live data to people immediately. We've proven that Smartsheet can handle anything we've thrown at it. It's like a very robust Swiss Army knife – there's nothing you can't do with it."*

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