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Something special for Surrey athletes

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Special Olympics **Surrey Athletes** Gear Up for Inaugural National Winter Games. In an exciting development for Special Olympics Great Britain, the country's leading sports training and competition provider for individuals with intellectual disabilities, the spotlight is on six talented athletes from Special Olympics Surrey. These exceptional individuals are set to represent their region at the upcoming inaugural National Winter Games organized by Special Olympics GB.

The event, scheduled to unfold in Folgaria, nestled in the picturesque northern Italian region of Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtiro, will feature alpine skiing and figure skating competitions for athletes with intellectual disabilities. From January 27 to February 3, the participating athletes will showcase their prowess on the icy slopes and the glittering rink.

A total of 73 athletes hailing from England, Scotland, and Wales will participate in the Special Olympics GB National Winter Games, and among them are the six accomplished athletes from Special Olympics **Surrey**:

- **Mikey Lines** – Alpine Skiing, SO South East – SO Surrey
- **Bartholome Meredith-Hardy** – Alpine Skiing, SO South East – SO Surrey
- **Stef Nakoneczny** – Alpine Skiing, SO South East – SO Surrey
- **Karen Oosthuizen** – Alpine Skiing, SO South East – SO Surrey
- **Elanor Sinden** – Alpine Skiing, SO South East – SO Surrey
- **Alice Willans** – Alpine Skiing, SO South East – SO Surrey

Colin Dyer, Chief Executive of Special Olympics GB, expressed his enthusiasm about expanding their competition calendar with the introduction of the National Winter Games. He highlighted the transformative impact of national and international events on athletes, inspiring them to develop life skills and make positive changes, supporting their independence and career growth.

Special Olympics GB is extending its gratitude to Special Olympics Grampian club for their dedicated planning efforts as the host club. Additionally, Inclusive Skating has been recognized as the delivery partner for all figure skating events. The Ski Company and Alpe Cimbra are providing crucial support to ensure the success of the National Winter Games.

Dyer emphasized that this competition will play a pivotal role in selecting athletes for the subsequent Special Olympics World Winter Games, slated for Torino, Italy, from March 8 to 16, 2025. Team Special Olympics GB will be represented by eight alpine skiers and two figure skaters, marking their return to the global stage since 2017.

Across England, Scotland, and Wales, Special Olympics GB's impact is evident, providing regular sporting opportunities for over 6,600 athletes with intellectual disabilities. With 95 accredited clubs offering training and competition in 27 different sports, a devoted team of 3,800 volunteers ensures the success of the programs.

Established in 1978, Special Olympics Great Britain is a non-profit charity dedicated to providing year-round sports coaching and athletic competition in summer and winter sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. With 95 accredited programs across England, Scotland, and Wales, the organization offers coaching and competition opportunities in 27 sports, supported by over 3,800 volunteers benefiting more than 6,600 athletes.

Special Olympics GB goes beyond sports, transforming lives by boosting confidence, realizing potential, enhancing physical fitness and mental well-being, fostering courage, and fostering new friendships. Financial support from individuals, trusts, and corporate donations is crucial for the continuation of their impactful work.

Founded in 1968, Special Olympics is a global movement aimed at ending discrimination against individuals with intellectual disabilities. Using the power of sport and programming in education, health, and leadership, Special Olympics fosters acceptance and inclusivity.

With over six million athletes, Special Olympics Unified Sports® partners, one million coaches, and volunteers in over 200 accredited programs, Special Olympics organizes more than 30 Olympic-type sports and over 100,000 Games and competitions annually. Learn more at www.SpecialOlympics.org.

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