

Special Olympics to Take Centre Stage in the PKO Bank Polski Ekstraklasa

Author: Special Olympics Poland

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The Polish edition of the largest European football celebration organised by Special Olympics will be featured across PKO Bank Polski Ekstraklasa stadiums. During Matchday 33, taking place from 15–18 May 2026, players and supporters will show their support for Special Olympics Poland athletes, with the entire round dedicated to athletes with intellectual disabilities.

PKO Bank Polski Ekstraklasa and Special Olympics Poland have joined forces once again to demonstrate that a passion for football knows no boundaries. The initiative serves as the official launch of the Polish edition of the 26th European Football Week of Special Olympics, supported by UEFA and national football associations in more than 40 countries and territories across Europe. Around 300 football events, tournaments and training sessions dedicated to athletes with intellectual disabilities will take place across the continent, promoted by leading European leagues including the Premier League, Bundesliga and Serie A.

#LetUsPlayTogether – A Unifying Idea

The long-standing partnership between Poland's top football division and the Special Olympics movement has become a permanent fixture in the sporting calendar. During the penultimate round of the 2025/26 season, tens of thousands of supporters in stadiums and millions watching on television will be introduced to athletes who overcome personal challenges every day.

Planned activities include:

- Visual promotion across all stadiums, with players entering the pitch alongside Special Olympics Poland and Ekstraklasa banners.
- A stadium video featuring Robert Lewandowski, long-time ambassador of the movement, emphasising that “football belongs to everyone”.
- Dedicated announcements from stadium announcers and television commentators explaining the purpose of the campaign.
- Joint social media activations from Ekstraklasa and Special Olympics Poland promoting equality, acceptance and respect.
- Invitations for groups of athletes with disabilities to attend matches as honoured guests.

Joanna Styczeń-Lasocka, General Director of Special Olympics Poland, said that football demonstrates how everyone is equal on the pitch and highlighted the campaign's goal of breaking down stereotypes and showing that athletes with disabilities share the same dreams and passion for sport as professional footballers.

Marcin Animucki, President of Ekstraklasa SA, added that the league is proud to stand alongside athletes with intellectual disabilities and to celebrate their determination, resilience and sporting spirit, which can inspire all athletes.

Road to Santiago 2027: Stop in Konin

This year's campaign has particular significance as it takes place during the 13th National Summer Games of Special Olympics Poland. These Games serve as the main qualification event for the Special Olympics World Summer Games Santiago 2027 in Chile.

Following the first phase of the Games in Katowice and Mikołów, a national football tournament will take place in Konin at the end of May, where the Polish national team for Santiago 2027 will be

selected.

About Special Olympics Poland

Special Olympics Poland is one of the country's largest sports movements, bringing together more than 17,000 athletes, 1,600 coaches and 4,500 volunteers across 507 clubs and 18 regional branches.

The organisation is supported by a distinguished group of ambassadors and friends, including Robert Lewandowski, Anna Lewandowska, Adam Małysz, Robert Korzeniowski, Joanna Jędrzejczyk, Roman Kosecki, Adam Nawalka and Michał Lewakow.

Globally, the Special Olympics movement includes more than 5.3 million athletes competing in 32 sports across nearly 200 countries. Special Olympics is officially recognised by the International Olympic Committee as one of the three pillars of the global Olympic movement.

Special Olympics Poland is supported by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism and the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (PFRON). Huawei Poland serves as the main sponsor, while PKP and PKP Intercity are strategic partners.