

Special Olympics Airlift welcomes first widebody aircraft as Cessna, Beechcraft and Hawker communities come together for athletes

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GRIDIRON AIR



EVERYBODY NEEDS A LIFT EVERY NOW AND THEN



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For decades, the Special Olympics Airlift, led by Cessna and Beechcraft and organized by Textron Aviation, has transported athletes to the USA Games through an extraordinary act of generosity — aircraft owners donating their time, aircraft and fuel. This year, that spirit expands in a powerful new way, as more athletes will arrive together than ever before, driven by the commitment of a longtime Cessna Citation customer.

For the first time in its history, a widebody aircraft will join the Airlift, making it possible for two delegations of athletes and coaches to travel side by side on a single flight, arriving together as teams.

That aircraft, a Boeing 777, is made possible through the support of the Arizona Cardinals and Gridiron Air, a charter airline specializing in customized, large-aircraft travel offering premium

services for sports teams, corporate groups and other clients. Together, they are helping extend the reach of the Airlift, ensuring more athletes can begin their Games experience together.

“Supporting teams
Olympics Airlift bring
CEO, Gridiron Air. “
sharing the excitement
is an honor to help
step onboard and to

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While the aircraft differs from the traditional fleet of Cessna, Beechcraft and Hawker aircraft that define the Airlift, its participation reflects the same commitment that has long united customers and industry partners across the general aviation community, using their resources to open doors for athletes and expand access to opportunity.

The aircraft will depart Phoenix, Arizona, for Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Friday, June 19. Upon arrival, athletes will join the broader Airlift welcome, including a ceremonial water salute that recognizes their journey and the collective effort behind it.

Following the competition, the aircraft will return athletes home on Saturday, June 27, completing a journey that reflects both the scale of the Airlift and the continued generosity of the aviation community that makes it possible.

The Special Olympics Airlift brings together Cessna, Beechcraft and Hawker customers, along with partners across the aviation industry, to remove barriers and ensure athletes from across the country can take part in the USA Games. Since the Airlift’s inception in 1987, this remarkable initiative has transported more than 10,000 athletes and coaches to the Special Olympics USA Games. For many, the journey is more than travel — it is the moment they arrive knowing they belong.

About Special Olympics Airlift

The Special Olympics Airlift, organized by [Textron Aviation](#) and its customers in collaboration with the Special Olympics community and impact.

Since the Airlift's inception, we have helped bring the aviation community to transport athletes to the Special Olympics USA Games, helping ensure

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