

Unified Sports: School Qualifiers

Soccer Introduction

What are Unified Sports?

Unified Sports is meant to join people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team to train and compete. This program is dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences. Unified Sport looks to develop Meaningful Competition, where coaches work together to create a balanced competitive environment. **Coaches are responsible for ensuring meaningful involvement of all players in the game.**

Additional Unified Sport Components

- Unified Sport consists of two kinds of Athletes:
 - **Special Olympics Athlete – an athlete with an intellectual disability/challenge.**
 - **Unified Sports Partner – an athlete without an intellectual disability.**
- Forced line changes (substitutions are required to ensure equal play time for all).
- **Unified Partners are intended to score points, impact the game in a meaningful way** and compete in this category. This includes passing, rebounding, shooting/scoring and defence. Unified partners should be tasked with defending the opposing unified partner.
Note: Unified athletes are not permitted to dominate and take over games but are expected to contribute.

Unified Soccer

1. Each Unified team will enter a roster with a mix of athletes with and without intellectual disabilities
2. Divisioning, games, fouls and penalties, points of emphasis, and tournament format are all unchanged for Unified Basketball.
3. The only difference between Unified and Traditional Basketball competition is the **mandated line changes**
4. Unified partners are expected to contribute meaningfully to the game along with SO athletes

Team and Players

1. **Minimum:** must start the game with at least **three Special Olympics Athletes** and **two Unified Partners** or forfeit the game. 1 Unified Partner should be on the field at all times
2. **Maximum:** roster of up to **ten athletes: six Special Olympics Athletes** and **four Unified Partners**

Special Olympics Ontario

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Registered Charitable Number - 11906 8435 RR0001

Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Divisioning

All teams are divisioned to play teams of similar ability.

Coaches can fill out a team ranking assessment at registration and can use our [Skill Assessments](#) as a guide.

- Team rankings and selected classifications are used to establish divisions.

The Game

1. Games are played **outdoors** on a modified soccer field approximately (45 by 30 meters)
2. The game will be played for a **running time of 20 minutes with a 2-minute half-time.**
3. The team that reaches **10 points first**, or the team with the most points at the end of the 20-minute match, wins the game.
4. The game will start with a flip of a coin for possession.
5. **Teams will NOT change ends after the half**
6. **Kick-ins** will be used instead of a throw-in when the ball goes out of bounds
7. **Shin Pads are required** for all athletes on the field*
8. **Cleats are not permitted** under any circumstances
9. **Substitutions** are allowed during dead balls.
10. A **free kick** is awarded for rule infringements, taken from the spot of the foul with opponents 6 yards away, and the ball must be stationary and moved to be in play.

KEY RESOURCES TO REVIEW:

- [SOO Guiding Unified Sport Principles](#)
- [SO Unified Sports Principle of Meaningful Involvement](#)
- [Unified Sports Coach Guidelines](#)
- [Unified Coaching Course](#)

Please Note: Note: All other rules of the game will abide by those of traditional Special Olympics School Soccer. This includes scoring, free kicks, penalty kicks, fouls, kick-ins, goal kicks, timeouts, etc.

Note: To qualify for the Provincial School Champions, teams compete within their conference, which may include schools beyond those faced at their qualifier. For details on the qualification process, visit the [School Hub](#) resources page

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