

Unified Sports: School Qualifiers

Floorball 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 Floorball

1. Each Unified team will enter a roster with a mix of athletes with and without intellectual disabilities
2. The only difference between Unified and Traditional Floorball competition is the mandated line changes
3. All other rules of the game will abide by those of traditional Special Olympics Floorball. Rules, penalties, and tournament format are all the same as Traditional Floorball
4. Unified partners are expected to contribute meaningfully to the game along with SO athletes

Team and Players

- **Minimum:** must start the game with at least **three Special Olympics Athletes** and **one Unified Partner** or forfeit the game. 1 Unified Partner should be on the field at all times
- **Maximum:** roster of up to **eight athletes: Five Special Olympics Athletes** and **three Unified Partners.**

Special Olympics Ontario

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

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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. The game is played on a **gym surface with makeshift boards outlining the court**
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. There will be **no overtime** if there is a tie game
5. Teams will **NOT change ends after the half**
6. **Substitutions: Coaches can make substitutions after any whistle.**
7. The game begins with a faceoff at center court.
8. If the ball goes out of bounds, the opposing team will start with the ball in a stationary position just inside the court where the ball exited the field of play.
9. **No player, except the goalkeeper, shall stand in the goal crease**, nor hold his/her stick in the goal crease.
10. After a save, goalies can throw or roll the ball.
11. **Faceoffs will occur:** to start the game/half, each goal, after penalty box infraction, each stoppage of play, off-setting penalties, and if it is inconclusive, who hit the ball out last.
12. There will be **three categories of penalties:** free hits, penalty shots and penalty box minutes. A list of infractions can be seen on the tech package.
 - a. **Sticks must remain below the knee when playing the ball and shooting.**
 - i. **No intentional body contact should occur at any time**

KEY RESOURCES

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

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