



CIFSS UNIFIED SPORTS®



Vision of Unified Sports®

The vision of Special Olympics Southern California (SOSC) and the CIF Southern Section is to allow high school students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to represent their high school in CIF Southern Section-sanctioned activities while participating **together** on a Unified Sports® team, providing students with a quality experience of sports training and competition.

Unified Sports® Team Philosophy

As a Unified Team, Unified Athletes and Partners train together to learn the basic skills of a given sport. **The primary objective of the Unified Sports® program is for athletes and their partners to make meaningful, personal connections throughout their season of sport and beyond.** The CIF Southern Section and Special Olympics California trust that administrators and coaches will use proper judgment in determining who will participate in Unified competition and in what capacity. The CIF Southern Section wishes to promote the inclusion of all students in education-based athletics as part of the school community. When establishing Unified Sports® teams and partnerships, there should be an emphasis on fostering healthy competition and quality experiences for Unified Athletes.

Definition of a Unified Athlete

For the purposes of CIF Southern Section competition, a Unified Athlete is an individual who meets **one** of the following criteria:

1. Receives special education services under the eligibility of intellectual or developmental disability (ID or DD) or Autism. Must be indicated on the athlete's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
2. Receives special education services and is on a non-diploma track or alternative pathway as indicated on the athlete's IEP.
3. Receives special education services in a moderate/severe program as indicated on the athlete's IEP.

Note: A person whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral, or emotional disability or a specific learning or sensory disability is not eligible to participate as a Special Olympics athlete but may be eligible to participate as a Unified Partner.

Note: To qualify as a Unified Athlete, the student must not compete at the varsity level in their sport or event during the season of sport.

Definition of a Unified Partner

A Unified Partner is an individual that meets all the following criteria:

1. A student at the same school who does not qualify as a Unified Sport Athlete.
2. A student who practices regularly with a Unified Athlete throughout the season in the sport in which they both participate.
3. A student who does not participate at the varsity level in the same sport or event as their Unified Athlete partner.

Neither a Unified Athlete nor Partner, at a school with more than one level of competition, may participate at the varsity level at any time during the season of sport. All Unified Athletes and Partners **MUST** be eligible by all CIF rules and regulations if they wish to participate in a school-sponsored Unified Sports® Program. The school administrator overseeing special education, and the athletic director must verify the criteria above before competition.

Practice

All Unified Sports® participants must complete a minimum of eight (8) practices before competing in an interscholastic contest or tournament.

CIFSS Paralympic Athlete Description



GENERAL GUIDELINES:

The 100 yard Freestyle and the 50 yard Freestyle Para-Athlete Events are scheduled for the Ford CIF Southern Section Swimming Championships.

- Para-Athlete events will be incorporated into the state meet by the CIF Southern Section staff.
- Para-Athletes will compete in separate races from traditional athletes.
- The top eight (8) athletes in each event will receive medals.

ELIGIBILITY:

- All applicable CIF rules and regulations will apply.
- Any high school student may be eligible to participate in the Para-Athlete Division with a documented permanent physical disability. Each athlete's physical disability must be verified by a licensed physician and maintained on permanent file at the school (i.e. IEP, 504).
- Schools and athletes are responsible for all aspects of participation in the events. (See Bylaw 503).

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:

Entries will be accepted through the CIF Southern Section provided link, no later than the meet entry deadline for all athletes.

- If more than nine (9) participants submit eligible entries in any event, we will create an additional heat.
- All qualifiers will be posted on the CIF Southern Section website at the time they become available.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Where can athletes compete?

Swim Para-Athletes can compete at any CIF sanctioned meet.

How does an athlete participate for their high school swim team?

The athlete must follow the same procedure at their school that has been established for traditional athletes competing in swim.

Can athletes in different classifications compete against one another in the same heat?

Yes, Boys and Girls heats may be combined for competition and separated at the conclusion to determine places for each gender and/or division.

Can a parent represent a Para-Athlete at the State Championships?

Athletes must be represented by their high school swim coach. The coach must be hired/appointed by the school. Coaches must meet all coaching certification requirements.

Are the NFHS uniform rules in place for Para-Athletes?

Yes, all uniform rules and regulations are in effect just as with traditional athletes. Any exceptions/modification may need to be considered and presented to meet officials for clarification.