



SPECIAL OLYMPICS 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 providing healthy competition focused on quality experiences for the 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). 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.
4. Has a diagnosis of Autism as indicated on the student's IEP and is enrolled in 2 or more special education classes as indicated on the student'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.

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 sport or event with their Unified Athlete partner.

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.