

SOPA Unified Sports® Procedures

These procedures were established by the SOPA Unified Advisory Committee, effective date December 1, 2016

Special Olympics
Pennsylvania



Unified Roster size/composition

All Unified teams must meet the roster size and composition requirements listed below for the respective team sport. After the minimum requirement is met, a variance of two (2) will be allowed for either partners or athletes. All participants on competitive Unified teams should be age and ability matched.

Sport	Minimum numbers* (athlete/partners)	Maximum numbers* (athlete/partners)
Flag Football	6 Players (3/3)	12 Players (6/6, 5/7, 7/5)
Floor Hockey	12 Players (6/6)	16 Players (8/8, 9/7, 7/9)
Volleyball	8 Players (4/4)	10 Players (5/5, 6/4, 4/6)
Soccer 5v5	7 Players (4/3)	10 Players (5/5, 6/4, 4/6)
Soccer 7v7	9 Players (5/4)	12 Players (6/6, 7/5, 5/7)
Soccer 11v11	13 Players (7/6)	16 Players (8/8 , 9/7, 7/9)
Softball	12 Players (6/6)	16 Players (8/8 , 9/7, 7/9)

**These roster numbers are required with entry information and start of competition. If anytime during the competition an athlete/partner is unable to play due to injury or illness (confirmed by the medical team); roster size may decrease. Most SOI (or National Governing Body) sport rules outline minimum numbers to continue competition, if needed the Games Committee can be summoned to make a ruling.*

Divisioning

- Until there are enough teams to create separate competitive and similar ability level Unified Sports divisions, Unified and Traditional teams will be combined in divisions based on the Special Olympics Divisioning criteria of ABILITY, AGE and GENDER (found in Article I, Section 10 of the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules).
- When divisions are combined, all teams will play following National Governing Body rules. All team members will be allowed to fully participate in all aspects of the game, which includes scoring points.
- The Unified Sports rules for (1) roster composition, (2) playing lineup (number of athletes and partners required on the field of play), and (3) other areas must be abided to at all times. Unified Sports teams need to follow the requirements of the Competitive Model, where athletes and partners are of similar age and ability.

Awarding

When Unified and Traditional teams are combined in one division, teams will be awarded by place of finish.

- The Traditional teams will receive Traditional medals/ribbons
- Unified teams will receive Unified medals/ribbons.
- For example if a division is composed of 3 Traditional teams and one Unified team and the Unified team finishes in 2nd place, teams will be awarded as follows: Gold – Traditional, Silver – Unified, Bronze – Traditional, 4th place – Traditional.

Eligibility for selection to higher level competitions (Qualifiers):

- In the case where events are a qualifier and specific Unified slots are offered at the next level (SOPA state events currently are bocce and bowling), at the completion of team competition and awards, Unified and Traditional teams will be separated for their respective advancement drawings holding their place of finish. For example if a Traditional team finishes in 2nd place behind a Unified team (in a combined division), they will be placed into their respective drawing as a 2nd place/silver medal team).
- In the case where an event is a qualifier and specific Unified slots are **not** offered at the next level (SOPA state events are 5v5 soccer, basketball, volleyball) teams will advance based on place of finish in the qualifier event. Unified and Traditional teams will not be separated out.

***If you have questions or seek additional information on Unified Sports
within Pennsylvania please contact:***

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