

CHANGING THE WORLD IS A CONTACT SPORT!

The combination of students working together provides the most opportunity for creating positive school climates that ensure EVERY student becomes a part of the social fabric within their schools.



Every student now has the opportunity to become an athlete, unified partner or student leader while creating a more inclusive student environment!

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 **School Championships**
Unified Sport



Special Olympics
Olympiques spéciaux
New Brunswick / Nouveau-Brunswick





What is Unified Sport?

Special Olympics Unified Sports is an inclusive sport program that brings athletes with and without intellectual disabilities together for competition. In Unified Sports programs, there are a comparable number of athletes with and without intellectual disability on the court/field at the same time. The implementation of a Unified Sport program is meant to create an environment of 'Meaningful Competition' wherein coaches work together to create a balanced competitive environment so that athletes can focus on competing to the best of their ability against evenly matched opponents.

Unified Basketball

- ◆ Basketball will run 3-on-3 games
- ◆ Ideally, teams will enter 6-player rosters
- ◆ 4 Special Olympics Athletes
- ◆ 2 Unified Sport Partners
- ◆ 20 minutes of continuous play
- ◆ 2 minute shifts with mandatory line changes
- ◆ Each line will have 2 Special Olympics Athletes and 1 Unified Sport Partner

What are the Components of a Unified Sport Program?

A ***Special Olympics Athlete*** is an athlete with an intellectual disability. Ideally, the best Special Olympics athletes are students who show an interest in sport participation, are competitive, and enjoy playing on a team.

A ***Unified Sports Partner*** is an athlete without an intellectual disability. Ideally, the best partners are students who have an interest in sport participation, are competitive and enjoy playing on a team (but not necessarily the best athlete in the school).

Meaningful Competition is an important component of Unified Sport. Coaches are responsible for putting players of comparable skill together on a team and on the court in a game so that an evenly matched competition will allow opportunities for every team member to contribute.

What are the Benefits of Unified Sport?

A competitive environment, in which athletes from different social backgrounds compete together, has the potential to bridge perceived and real social divides. Some research has noted that Unified Sports Partners have shown significant improvements in their attitude toward individuals with disabilities as a result of playing on a unified sports team. Other research has cited similar conclusions about Special Olympics Athletes and a heightened level of awareness of their peers without disabilities.

The important thing to remember is that in addition to the universally accepted personal benefits of involvement in sport and competition, Unified Sports provides social benefits for **both** Special Olympics Athletes and Unified Sports Partners. Unified Sports offers athletes the opportunity to improve upon their sport-specific skills, gain valuable competition experience, make new friends, and gain a heightened awareness of the social existence of peers facing different obstacles.

PROGRAM PLAN

- ◆ Meet with school Principals and P.E Staff (September/October)
- ◆ Pilot to High Schools
- ◆ Present the project to each school's student body (October)
- ◆ Provide training for student leaders and interested staff (October)
- ◆ Teams train and practice from November – April (lunch hours, once or twice a week).
- ◆ Teams will have the opportunity to play a few games against other schools scheduled throughout the season to better prepare them for the Championships in the spring.
- ◆ Supply team uniforms (same styles/colors of current basketball uniforms within the school)
- ◆ Hold a Championship the following Spring!

