



**Special Olympics**  
New Jersey



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## **2019-20 Interscholastic Unified Sports Overview**

In June 2016, Special Olympics New Jersey (SONJ) and the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) signed a formal partnership to establish interscholastic Unified Sports programs and competitions in New Jersey.

In the first year of the partnership (2016-2017), the NJSIAA experimented with hosting a variety of Unified Sports competitions, which included the sports of soccer, bowling, basketball and track & field. The information and feedback gathered during these introductory seasons will help guide us as we continue to implement and develop interscholastic Unified Sports programs in schools throughout the state.

Special Olympics Unified Sports bring people with and without disabilities together on the same team, each player an equal and meaningful part of the team. Unified Sports teams are made up of nearly equal numbers of students with and without disabilities of similar age and ability.

Unified Sports is one of three components in Special Olympics Unified School initiative. Through Special Olympics Play Unified School Partnership, SONJ offers grants to schools and districts to implement the Unified Schools program aimed at building more inclusive school communities. Together they are working with school teams, which include Athletic Directors, Special Services staff and school and district administrators to establish Play Unified Clubs and Unified Sports programs to foster social inclusion, understanding and, most of all, friendships among students with and without disabilities.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the NJSIAA will host state-level Unified competitions in the sports of bowling, basketball, and track & field (indoor and outdoor). **In order to be eligible to compete in NJSIAA competitions, teams must declare/register with Special Olympics New Jersey and the NJSIAA at the beginning of the season.** The rules and regulations for each of these sports can be found on the [NJSIAA website](#).

**Eligibility and requirements are outlined below for each of the interscholastic Unified Sports.**

## **Bowling**

At sectional and state-level competitions, Unified bowling teams will follow the Baker format and should consist of a minimum of three total bowlers; two bowlers with intellectual/developmental disabilities (Unified athletes) and one bowler without I/D disabilities (Unified partners). Teams may choose to have two alternates listed on the roster for a maximum of 5 bowlers per team.

### **NJSIAA**

#### Important Dates

- Pre-season Coach Webinar: Nov. 12 @ 3:00 p.m.
- Opening date: Nov. 24
  - [Register](#) by this date if you plan to participate
- Tournament Entry Deadline: Jan. 20
  - Contact Al Stumpf at [astumpf@njsiaa.org](mailto:astumpf@njsiaa.org)
- Sectional dates: Feb. 1
  - Will compete at same sectional as girls team
- Finals dates: Feb. 10
  - Top 4 teams from each sectional advance to finals

#### Locations

- same as NJSIAA venues for sectional and finals competitions

#### Eligibility

- All high school Unified bowling teams who are [registered with SONJ & NJSIAA](#) are eligible to participate
- Unified athletes may compete up to age 21 as long as they are enrolled at the school
- Varsity level bowlers are NOT permitted to be Unified partners
- Participation requirements:
  - Teams must compete in at least one interscholastic competition prior to the NJSIAA sectional competitions
  - All bowlers must have a school medical on file prior to competition

## **Basketball**

All Unified basketball teams consist of 10-12 players and should include approximately equal numbers of students with intellectual/developmental disabilities (Unified athletes) and students without I/D disabilities (Unified partners). A ratio of 3 Unified athletes and 2 Unified partners must be maintained on the court at all times during any competition.

### **NJSIAA**

#### Important Dates

- Pre-season Coach Webinar: Dec. 5 @ 3:00 p.m.
- Opening date: Dec. 14
  - [Register](#) by this date if you plan to participate

- All registered teams will automatically be entered into the post-season tournament. If your team does not want to participate in the post-season, you must opt-out. Deadline: Feb. 3
  - Contact Al Stumpf at [astumpf@njsiaa.org](mailto:astumpf@njsiaa.org)
- Unified-only sectional dates: Feb. 29-March 7
  - First round of sectionals will be a divisioning round where teams will be observed and then categorized into one of two divisions based on skill level and regular season record. A maximum of 8 teams will be selected and seeded within each division.
  - Second round of sectionals will be a one-day, single elimination tournament
- Tournament of Champions: March 22
  - Top D1 team from each sectional advances to Tournament of Champions
  - Top D2 team from each sectional will play final game during the traditional boys/girls semifinal.
- Locations: TBD

#### Eligibility

- All high school Unified basketball teams who are [registered with SONJ & NJSIAA](#) are eligible to participate
- Unified athletes may compete up to age 21 as long as they are enrolled at the school
- Varsity level basketball players are NOT permitted to be Unified partners
- Participation requirements:
  - Teams must compete in at least two interscholastic competitions prior to the NJSIAA sectional competitions
  - All participants must have a school medical on file prior to competition

#### **Unified Cup Championship (formerly Shriver Cup)**

The 2020 Unified Cup Basketball tournament will be an invitational event.

- Date: *Sunday, April 5, 2020 (tentative)*
- Time: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Location: Princeton University

#### **Track & Field**

Unified Track & Field functions only as a TEAM sport where teams consist of anywhere from 4 to 20 members and should include approximately equal numbers of students with intellectual/developmental disabilities (Unified athletes) and students without I/D disabilities (Unified partners). Unified competition will be offered in one or more of the following events: 100 meters, 200 meters, 400 meters, 4x100 relay, 4x200 relay, 4x400 relay, shot put, and running long jump.

#### **NJSIAA (Spring – Outdoor)**

##### Important Dates

- Pre-Season Coach Webinar: March 2 @ 3:00 p.m.
- Opening date: April 1
  - [Register](#) by this date if you plan to participate

- Post-Season Registration:
  - Entries Deadline: May 13
  - Contact NJSIAA Assistant Director Al Stumpf at [astumpf@njsiaa.org](mailto:astumpf@njsiaa.org)
- Unified meets: TBD, April 23, April 30, May 7, May 14
- Sectional dates: TBD, May 29-30
  - Unified only sectionals north and central (others added as needed)
- Group Meets: June 6 (SAT date)
  - Top 6 teams from each sectional advance to Group meets
  - Teams will attend same Group meet as traditional track & field team
- Meet of Champions: June 13 (ACT Date)
  - Top 6 relays teams (4x100, 4x400) from each Group meet advance to MOC
- Locations: same as NJSIAA venues for Groups and Meet of Champions, sectionals TBD

#### Eligibility

- All high school Unified track & field teams are [registered with SONJ & NJSIAA](#) are eligible to participate
- Unified athletes may compete up to age 21 as long as they are enrolled at the school
- Varsity level track team members are NOT permitted to be Unified partners
- Participation requirements:
  - Teams must compete in *at least two* interscholastic meets prior to the NJSIAA Unified sectional competitions (one tri meet would satisfy this requirement)
  - All participants must have a school medical on file prior to competition

*\*\*All dates, times, and locations are subject to change\*\**