

Unified Track & Field

General Rules

Special Olympics Unified Sports combine approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) as teammates on teams for training and competition. As a result, high school students with and without intellectual disabilities are provided the opportunity to represent their high school in MSHSAA-sanctioned activities by participating on a Unified Sports team.

To participate in MSHSAA Unified Track & Field, schools must be a Unified Champion School (UCS) with Special Olympics Missouri (SOMO).

- SOMO will provide each participating Unified Champion School a list of eligible schools.
- Unified Track & Field will follow the rules of the National Federation and will govern the sport when applicable. Rule modifications have been noted in this document.
- SOMO/MSHSAA has provided a framework in this document to define competition slots available for participation competitions.

Definition of Participants

- Unified Student Athlete: a student who is receiving special education and related services pursuant to an individual education program based on a cognitive, developmental and/or intellectual delay or disability (ID/IDD).
- Unified Student Partner: a student who is NOT identified by the school as a Unified Student Athlete.

Unified Student Athlete

- Age Requirement: may participate in Unified Sports, provided the Unified Student Athlete is enrolled in the school.
- A Unified Student Athlete who (i) is receiving special education and related services pursuant to an individual education program and (ii) based on the Unified Student Athlete's individual education plan (IEP) the Unified Student Athlete is required to remain in school up to the school year in which the Unified Student Athlete turns 21 and may continue to participate, provided the Unified Student Athlete is enrolled in the school.
- Academic Requirement: must be making satisfactory progress toward the goals, objectives and benchmarks contained in any progress report and/or any case conference committee, and such facts must be certified by the building principal.

Unified Student Partner

- Must comply with MSHSAA eligibility requirements.
- Must be academically eligible.
- A student who participates in a varsity or sub-varsity competition or scrimmage (in a non-Unified Sports) is prohibited from competing as a Unified Partner or Athlete in that same sport.
- Appropriate participation for such a Student Athlete or Partner may take place as an assistant coach or manager.

Completion of Athletic Physical, Consent, Acknowledgement of Risks and Release Form

- All participants in Unified Sports must have appropriate MSHSAA forms on file with their respective campus.

Participation by Gender

- Unified Sports teams shall be organized as co-ed teams and consist of a 50% ratio combination of students with intellectual disabilities and students without intellectual disabilities.
- The team ratio will be reviewed to ensure equity in the competition.

Coaches Eligibility

- Coaches must have successfully completed the NFHS course on Unified Sports at learn.specialolympics.org

Classification of Schools

- Unified Track & Field teams shall be aligned in a single class tournament series.

Administration of Unified Track & Field

- Officials are expected to enforce all rules which create an unfair advantage including all false starts in running events and scratches in field events.
- Discretion is allowed when a violation does not create a competitive advantage (e.g., a Student-Athlete who, due to a disability, has difficulty staying in the assigned lane and does not interfere with another runner).
- Student participants shall NOT be identified as Student-Athletes or Student-Partners other than for the administration of the competition.

Officials

- Unified Student Athletes and Partners are expected to follow rules and meet expectations. However, officials will have flexibility in accommodating individual disabilities.
- Officials are expected to enforce violations when a competitive advantage is gained or creates a competitive disadvantage for another competitor (For example false starts, scratches in long jump, and relay exchanges outside the exchange zone).
- If a runner has an obvious false start, the race should not be recalled in the traditional format. The meet official should wait until the race is over and DQ the individual.

Unified Track and Field Season

- A minimum of 2 regular season meets (hosted at a participating school) must be prior to the postseason Regional Meet.

Team Roster

- A school MAY participate in Unified Track and Field competitions with a minimum of 2 participants (1 Student Athlete and 1 Student Partner) entered in 2 events.
- If a team enters all 6 events at postseason competitions, the minimum roster would be 12 (6 Student Athletes and 6 Student Partners) and the maximum roster will be 24 (12 Student Athletes and 12 Student Partners) not including alternates. Maximum roster including alternates would be 36 (18 Student Athletes and 18 Student Partners).
- All students listed on an entry form must be noted as participant or alternate
- A school must enter an equal number of Student-Athletes and Student-Partners to compete in an event (CANNOT have an athlete entered without a partner and vice versa must be entered as a pair).
- Teams will be co-ed with no limitation on the number of Boys or Girls in an event or on a team, except for the boys and girls relays, which are gender specific.
 - If a school has a mixed gender relay team, the team shall be entered in the Boys relay event. However, if they already have a Boys relay entered then the points for the mixed gender team will not count towards the team total.
- Teams may use assistants for Student-Athletes. Assistants are Student-Partners who meet all eligibility requirements of Student-Partners.
 - Assistants are not competitors in the event, serving only as helpers to their Student-Athlete teammate.
 - Assistants may be competitors in other events, but not in the event in which they are serving as an assistant.
 - Serving as an assistant does not count towards an individual's 2 event limit.
 - Assistants are non-scoring participants.
 - Coaches should inform the starter or field event judge when an assistant will be used in the event.
 - Assistants may be used for Student-Athletes in all events, including field events.
 - When requested by a coach, Officials may change a Student Athlete's Lane assignment in a running event to help accommodate the Student Athlete's disability, including, but not limited to, moving a Student Athlete to the first lane so their assistant can run alongside them on the inside of the track.
 - Assistants may NOT touch the Student-Athlete that they are assisting.
 - Assistants may NOT create an unfair advantage for the Student-Athlete that they are assisting as determined by the meet official.
 - In the long jump, assistants should be used in the approach only and should not enter the long jump pit.
 - Assistants begin races behind and in the same lane as the Student Athlete that they are assisting or inside of Lane 1 or outside Lane 8.
 - Modifications could be, using every other lane and having Assistant in the open lane beside the runner. Guide ropes will be permitted if deemed necessary and/or approved in advance.
 - An assistant may move beside or in front of the Student Athlete they are assisting if they do not hinder another participant.
 - Violations of this section will cause the Student Athlete being assisted to be disqualified in that event.

Unified Track and Field Events

- Unified Tournament Series Events
 - Each school may enter the following maximum number of participants in the events below, but there must be an equal number of Student-Athletes and Student-Partner entered in each event:
 - **100m Dash** (4 participants/2 Student-Athletes and 2 Student- Partners)
 - **400m Dash** (4 participants/2 Student-Athletes and 2 Student-Partners)
 - **4x100m Relay Boys**(1 relay team/4 participants/2 Student-Athletes and 2 Student-Partners)
 - **4x100m Relay Girls** (1 relay team/4 participants/2 Student-Athletes and 2 Student-Partners)
 - **Shot Put** (4 participants/2 Student-Athletes and 2 Student-Partners)
 - **Long-Jump** (4 participants/2 Student-Athletes and 2 Student-Partners)
- Tournament Series Administration
 - Schools from the accepted pool (must be UCS and MSHSAA member school) will participate in regular season and postseason competition.
 - **The teams with the top 3 team totals from each of the postseason Area Meets will advance to the State Championship Meet.**
 - All scoring will occur during heats and flights which are determined by the best certified times or distances.

Long Jump Rules and Regulations

- During the tournament series, a 20" or 24" takeoff board will be used where feasible.
- A second takeoff line or board may be moved closer to the long jump pit, if needed, for contestant safety.
- For safety reasons, competitors having jumped 13' or more at any time during the season should use the board furthest from the pit.
- Contestants may use a "standing" long jump approach during competition.
- Prior to competition, competitors should identify with the judge which board they will use and if a standing long jump is used over a running approach.

Shot Put Rules and Regulations

- The shot-put sector shall measure 34.92° for shot put throughout the regular season and MSHSAA tournament series events.
- The shot must weigh at least 8 lbs. 13 oz., or 4 kg.
- All competitors, regardless of gender, will use the-8 lbs.13 oz, or 4 kg., shot.

Relays Rules and Regulations

- Dropping a baton is not automatically a DQ.
- The new National Federation Track and Field rules concerning exchange zones in effect for 2020 will apply to Unified Track and Field.
- On the day of a tournament series meet, the games committee may allow a school to add an otherwise eligible member of the school's team to participate in a relay if the school has fewer than 4 members listed on the entry list as participants or alternates. However, the school shall be considered disqualified and receive no points.

Participation Limitations

- Regular Season – During the regular season an individual may be entered in up to 4 events, including relays. No contestant shall participate in more than 4 events.
- Postseason Area and/or State Meet(s) – An individual **may NOT** be entered (as a participant AND/OR as an alternate) in more than 2 events, relays inclusive. No contestant shall participate in more than 2 events.

Uniforms (See Rule 4-3 of the NFHS Track & Field Rules Book)

- Items such as hats, hoodies, baseball caps, kerchiefs, bandanas, sunglasses, etc. are not considered part of the official school uniform and shall not be worn while participating nor while receiving awards.
- Any modification to uniforms that is deemed medically necessary will be acceptable with a note from physicians. For example, sunglasses with light sensitivities or pouches that cover ostomy bags.

Management (Regular Season Meets)

- Total responsibility for the local arrangements has been delegated to the host school.
- The host school shall provide and be responsible for tickets (if applicable), ticket takers/sellers, ushers, announcers, scorers, timekeepers, all necessary equipment for conducting the meet or contest, necessary facilities for the competing teams and those directly affiliated with the competing teams (such as the principal, athletic director, coaches, student managers, etc.), facilities for spectators/fans and crowd control (hereinafter known as the local arrangements).
 - Complete information must be sent to all participating schools and officials.
 - Unless entrant's best performances are entered in the proper column, contestants will not be considered entered in an event.
 - Host schools must submit a copy of all unified entries and results.

Management (Postseason Meets)

- Operation and management of the Regional and State meets will be in collaboration with SOMO.
- Entries and results will be submitted to SOMO.
- Host shall provide and be responsible for tickets, ticket takers/sellers, ushers, announcers, scorers, timekeepers, all necessary equipment for conducting the meet or contest, necessary facilities for the competing teams and those directly affiliated with the competing teams (such as the principal, athletic director, coaches, student managers, etc.), facilities for spectators/fans and crowd control (hereinafter known as the local arrangements).
- Complete information must be sent from SOMO to all participating schools and officials at postseason meets.

Standards of Performance

- Each entrant, including alternates, must have a qualifying mark for each event entered.
- The entrant's **best** time/distance must be listed on the Official Entry form based on a minimum of 2 regular season meets.
- Qualifying marks must be from a regular season meet (not practice) and recorded on the score sheet as signed by the official.
- As a team advances in postseason meets, each school may list ONLY the participants that competed and received a mark/time at the prior meet.
- The integrity of the scoring of a Unified Track & Field competition is dependent on accurate seeding based on qualifying marks.
 - Inaccurate qualifying marks can cause an unfair competitive advantage, so schools will be held to a high standard in reporting accurate qualifying marks.

Seeding – Regional and State

- All flights are scored events with each flight having a 1st place finisher, a 2nd place finisher, etc.
- The best times and distances are assigned to the first heat or flight.
- When forming flights, the maximum number of participants in any heat or flight is 8.
- No heat or flight will be run with less than 4 participants unless there are fewer than 4 participants entered.
- Each heat or flight will have the same number of participants, extra participants will be entered into the higher seeded heat(s) or flight(s). **Examples:**
 - 15 participants - 8 in the first heat and 7 in the second heat
 - 17 participants - 6 in the first heat, 6 in the second heat, 5 in the third heat
 - 23 participants - 8 in the first heat, 8 in the second heat, 7 in the third heat
 - 19 participants - 7 in the first heat, 6 in the second heat, 6 in the third heatPlace competitors within each flight in descending order of performance.

Order of Events for Regional and State Meets

Long Jump, Shot Put, 100m Dash, 400m Dash, 4x100 Girls Relay, 4x100 Boys Relay

Procedure - Running Events

#1=fastest; #40=slowest (If more heats are needed the same format will be followed)

100m Dash and/or 400m Dash

Lane 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

- **Heat 1** 7 5 3 1 2 4 6 8
- **Heat 2** 15 13 11 9 10 12 14 16
- **Heat 3** 23 21 19 17 18 20 22 24
- **Heat 4** 31 29 27 25 26 28 30 32
- **Heat 5** 39 37 35 33 34 36 38 40
- **Heat 6** 47 45 43 41 42 44 46 48

400m Relay – 2 turn stagger

Lane 1 2 3 4 5 6

- **Heat 1** 5 4 1 2 3 6
- **Heat 2** 11 10 7 8 9 12

All heats are determined by the best time/distance taken from entry.

- Postseason Regional Meet: entry from best time/mark from regular season
- Postseason State Championship Meet: entry from Postseason Regional Meet

Procedure – Field Events

Long Jump and Shot Put

- Arrange the competitors in descending order of performance.
- Assign competitors to flights in groups of 4-8.
- A contestant will take at least 1 attempt at his/her turn. Contestants may take all their remaining tries during their turn provided the field event judge is notified.

Scratches – Postseason

- It is recommended that each host school conduct a coaches' meeting prior to the day of the Postseason Regional meet. If conducted, each participating school should be represented by a coach or a school representative.
- Items to be covered at this meeting could include the following:
 - Distribution of seeds and correction of any seeding errors; **changes in times/distances will not be permitted at this meeting.**
 - Explanation of certain administrative details of the meet, i.e., parking, awards, scratch meeting, protests, check-in, etc.

Regional Meet

- Coaches have until 4p the day prior to the meet to scratch participants and replace them with alternates **listed** on the Regional entry roster.
- At the Regional meet, a scratch meeting must be held at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the first field event.
- At the scratch meeting, coaches declare any scratches if an athlete scratches, then the partner will not be able to participate and vice versa. **Substitutions will NOT be allowed at the scratch meeting.**
 - For the Girls 400m Relay and the Boys 400m Relay, coaches may scratch and replace the relay rosters up until the time the relay teams report to the clerk of the course, provided relay team members are entered as either a participant or an alternate.
- A contestant whose relay team is scratched due to injury or disciplinary action against other relay team members shall not be scratched from other events if documented by a physician in the case of injury or by the principal in disciplinary action.
- Heats and flights will NOT be reseeded following the scratch meeting.

State Meet

- At the State meet, a scratch meeting must be held at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the first field event.
- At the scratch meeting, coaches declare any scratches (if a qualified athlete must scratch then so does the partner of that athlete in that event and vice versa). **Substitutions will NOT be allowed at the scratch meeting.**
- For the Girls 400m Relay and the Boys 400m Relay, coaches may scratch and replace the relay rosters up until the time the relay teams report to the clerk of the course, provided relay team members are entered as either a participant or an alternate.
- A contestant whose relay team is scratched due to injury or disciplinary action against other relay team members shall not be scratched from other events if documented by a physician in the case of injury or by the principal in disciplinary action.
- Heats and flights will NOT be reseeded following the scratch meeting.

Scoring

- Each heat/flight will carry the same weight for scoring (i.e., the winner of the fastest heat scores the same number of team points as the winner of the slowest heat).
- Participants from the same school may be assigned to the same heat/flight.
- Team points awarded for each heat or flight will be the following:
 - 1st = 8 pts
 - 2nd = 7 pts.
 - 3rd = 6 pts.
 - 4th = 5 pts
 - 5th = 4 pts
 - 6th = 3 pts
 - 7th = 2 pts
 - 8th = 1 pt
- The maximum number of participants in any heat/flight is 8.

Ties - must be broken for the last qualifying team position

- **Regional** - In the event of a tie for 6th place (and qualifying for State), the tie will be broken by determining the greatest number of 1st place finishes in individual heats, inclusive of shot put and long jump. If a tie still exists, the tie will be broken by determining the greatest number of 2nd places finishes. The process will continue until the tie is broken. If a tie still exists, a coin will be flipped to determine the team qualifying for advancement. In the event of a tie for a team championship, both teams will be recognized as winners, and duplicate awards will be provided for both teams.
- **State Finals** - In the event of a tie for the team championship, both teams will be recognized as winners and duplicate awards will be provided for both teams.