

Unified Sports

*On the field we're teammates,
and off the field we're friends.*



Special Olympics
Be a fan.



*Be a fan of acceptance, dignity,
and the human race.*

Overview

2008 Special Olympics Asia Regional Family Summit

- What is Unified Sports?
- History of Unified Sports
- Benefits of Unified Sports
- Research Findings
- Criteria for Success
- Unified Sports Coaches
- Unified Sports Teams
- Guidelines for Successful Competition



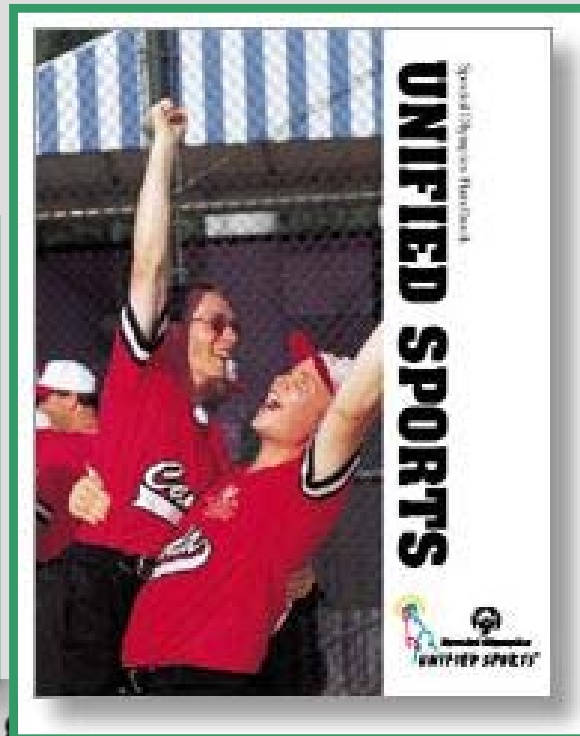
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What is Unified Sports?

A program that combines Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities on sports teams for training and competition.



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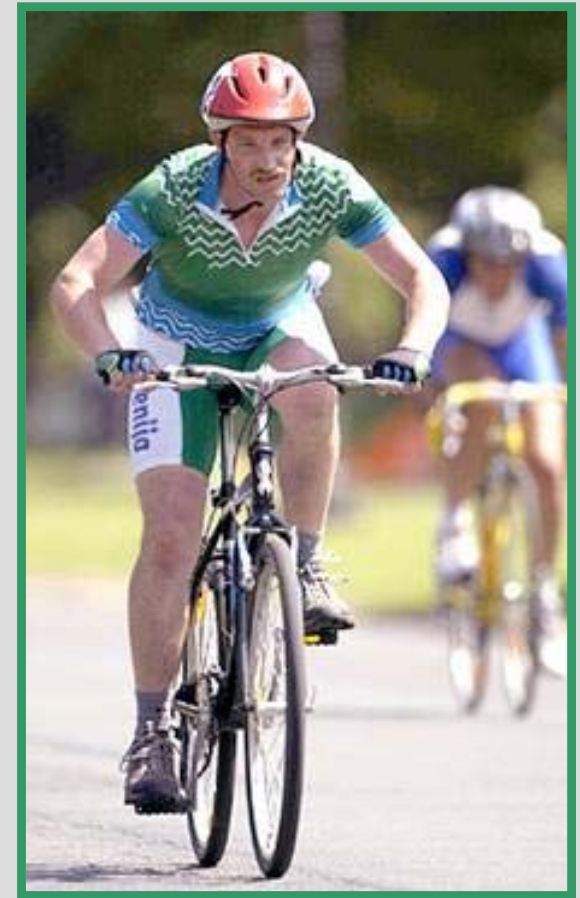
History of Unified Sports

- **1983** – Massachusetts “Integrated” Softball Team
 - **1988** – Pilot Projects funded by SOI grants
 - **1989** – Worldwide implementation in team sports
 - **1991** – Unified Sports at World Games in Minneapolis
 - **1996** – Unified Sports Rules adopted for all Sports



Benefits of Unified Sports

- Sports skills development
- Competition experiences
- Community-based participation
- Public education
- Family involvement
- Personal development
- Peer interaction



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Research Findings

- Unified Sports ...
 - has positive impact on all participants
 - improves understanding of people with intellectual disabilities
 - complements inclusion
 - is significantly influenced by commitment and attitude of staff
 - has continuing issues with partner recruitment and dominance



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Criteria for Success

Appropriate sport selection
Qualified coaching staff



Selection of teammates

Regular training and
competition

Compliance with official rules,
including ability divisioning



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Unified Sports Coaches

- Philosophy and Ethics
- Growth and Development
- Teaching and Communication
- Skills and Tactics
- Organization and Administration
- Sport Safety and Injury Prevention
- Physical Preparation
- Evaluation



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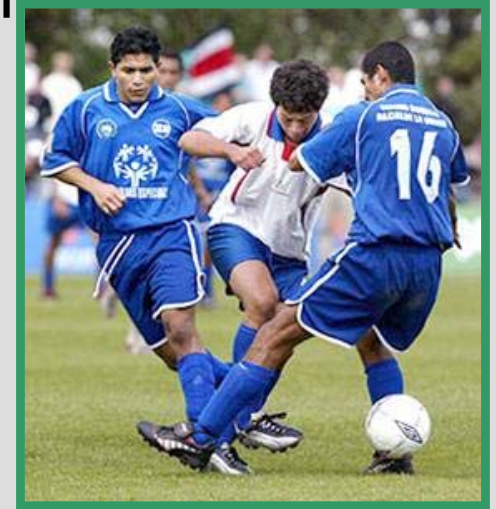


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Unified Sports Coaches

Top-flight Unified Sports Coaches...

- Ensure all athletes contribute to team
- Allow athletes to build connections through other activities
- Design drills to challenge each team member
- Match player ability to role on the team
- Control player dominance by maximizing the strength of low ability athletes with team tactics



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Unified Sports Teams

Ability Grouping (sport selection)



Age Grouping



Readiness (physical and mental)



Program Growth



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Unified Sports Teams

Principle of Meaningful Involvement

All participants...

- play without significant health or safety risks
- play according to rules
- have basic sport skills and concepts



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Unified Sports Teams

Where does Unified Sports start?

- Existing Special Olympics athletes and acquaintances
- School-based programs
- Community-based programs



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Unified Sports Teams

Organizing a Unified Sports Team

- Select the sport
- Recruit and train coaches
- Secure practice facilities
- Target and recruit team members
- Hold tryouts
- Set standards for participation
- Set practice/competition schedule
- Get equipment and uniforms



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Guidelines for Successful Competition

- Conduct Unified Sports coaches training before the competition
- Ensure participants are registered
- Collect pre-event information
 - (team ability level –
 - participation agreement)
- Prepare sport committee & officials
- Carry-out on-site divisioning



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