

2018 Unified Sports, Track & Field (Exhibition)

Regular Season:

Member schools may incorporate Unified Sports, Track & Field events into their existing track meets throughout the season. Participants shall meet all necessary eligibility requirements as outlined in the NSAA Constitution and Bylaws and be placed on the member schools' Track & Field eligibility list.

Schools may choose to reward participants in their regular season invite as they so choose. The NSAA will use the 2018 exhibition season to determine 2019 implementation.

Dual Participation: Participants may compete in both Unified Sports, Track & Field and existing Track & Field during the season. However, participants shall not be entered into events in both divisions in any one individual track meet/invite. Participants are limited to one meet/invite per day.

2019: Without complete certainty, the goal for 2019 will be to award a State Championship and Runner-Up team. Qualifying for the State Championship would likely use the same process used in the 2018 exhibition, outlined in "State Championship: Exhibition" (page 5).

Purpose of Unified Sports®

Dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences, Unified Sports® joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. Having sport in common is just one more way that preconceptions and false ideas are swept away.

Dan Masters is the NSAA staff member who coordinates Unified Sports®. If schools have questions regarding this activity, please contact Dan at dmasters@nsaahome.org or Cindy Callaway, Administrative Assistant, ccallaway@nsaahome.org.

NSAA ATHLETIC BYLAWS & APPROVED RULINGS GOVERNING UNIFIED SPORTS

3.11.13 UNIFIED SPORTS

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is an inclusive activities program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals without intellectual disabilities on teams for competition and inclusive activities fostering an environment of social inclusion.

3.11.13.1 Students must be a bona fide member of an NSAA member school.

3.11.13.2 Students must have a recognized disability defined within 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA).

3.11.13.3 Students must have the appropriate adapted pre-participation forms completed and on file at the member school of which they are to participate.

3.11.13.4 Students will follow the guidelines set forth in their individual education plans and/or local school eligibility requirements.

3.11.13.5 Classification of unified programs will be placed in one class.

- 3.11.13.6 Schools from member high schools may be combined for unified programs to field a common participating group with an agreement made jointly by the boards of education of the involved member schools.

APPROVED RULING AND INTERPRETATIONS FOR 3.11.13

1. *Unified Sports is an inclusive program that focuses on students with intellectual disabilities partnering with students without intellectual disabilities. The only recognized disability for Unified Sports athletes is intellectual disabilities. All students without intellectual disabilities, even though they may have other disabilities, may participate as partners with the students with intellectual disabilities.*
2. *An age rule exception is extended for non-contact Unified Sports for a student identified under NDE Rule 51 as an individual with intellectual disabilities (See Approved Ruling 2.3.1). Unified Sport athletes who become twenty-one years of age on or after August 1 shall be eligible on the basis of age in non-contact Unified Sports until the end of the current school year. The eight-semester rule shall be waived for such students; however, such students shall not be permitted to participate in more than four seasons of any one activity at the high school level (Bylaw 2.2.3).*

2.3 AGE

- 2.3.1 **Age Limitation.** No student shall be eligible for interschool competition who has attained the age of nineteen years except as follows: A student who becomes nineteen years of age on or after August 1 shall be eligible on the basis of age until the end of the current school year.

Exception: if the student is a bona fide student with a disability as defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the regulations promulgated there under, and the student's specific disability has contributed significantly to the student's inability to meet the requirements of this Bylaw, that student may be declared eligible by the Executive Director if, in the sole discretion of the Executive Director through the hardship application process, on a case-by-case the Executive Director determines that:

- a. The student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- b. The student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or activity maturity over the other participants; and
- c. The student's participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- d. There is no evidence of "red-shirting" or other indicia of academic dishonesty. Students granted this exception will be limited to 4 years (8 semesters) of participation at the varsity level. Students granted this exception must adhere to all applicable NSAA Bylaws and Approved rulings.

APPROVED RULINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS FOR 2.3.1

1. Students who have become ineligible because of age are ineligible for all interscholastic contests including non-varsity team competition.

2. The oldest age given on any annual report shall be accepted as the student's age unless a birth certificate certified by the Bureau of Vital Statistics, State Capitol, Lincoln, or the Bureau of Vital Statistics of any other state, can be produced to the contrary.
3. The Age Limitation Bylaw 2.3.1 is an objective standard; a student must meet the age limitation set forth in Bylaw 2.3.1 to be eligible for participation and competition. The only consideration for a waiver of the age eligibility rule shall be to determine if a discrepancy exists in the student's reported Date of Birth that, upon further examination and evidence, would result in the establishment of the correct Date of Birth. [See, Pottgen v. MSHSAA, 40 F. 3d. 926 (8th Cir. 1994).]
4. In light of NDE Title 92, Chapter 51, (003.49) (hereinafter "Rule 51") that states, "School age programs shall mean special education programs and related services designed to serve children with verified disabilities from age five through the school year in which the student reaches age twenty-one," an age rule exception is extended for Unified Sports activities and events to students who are identified under Rule 51 competing as students with intellectual disabilities. Unified Sport athletes who become twenty-one years of age on or after August 1 shall be eligible on the basis of age in non-contact Unified Sports until the end of the current school year.

Participation:

The NSAA has one competitive interscholastic division. Participation in the interscholastic program of a high school is limited to students in grades 9-12. Student athletes will follow existing participation bylaws as outlined in Article 2 of the NSAA Bylaws.

APPROVED RULINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS FOR 3.5.1:

13. *NSAA Bylaw 3.1.1.2 specifies that no student shall participate in more than one sport per season. An exception would be that such dual participation would be approved for students participating in Unified Sports®. Students in NSAA member schools that participate in Unified Sports® may also participate on an interscholastic athletic team during the Unified Sports season. This does NOT apply to other NSAA sports.*
14. *Outside participation is approved for students participating in Unified Sports®. As an example, students in NSAA member schools that participate in Unified Sports® may also participate on their "club" bowling team during the NSAA Unified Sports®, Bowling season. (exception to Bylaw 3.5.1) This does NOT apply to other NSAA sports.*

NSAA Unified Sports, Track & Field teams can compete only with other teams that are registered with the NSAA during the Unified Sports, Track & Field season.

(Athlete) Eligibility:

1. To be eligible for participation in Unified Sports, an outgrowth of Special Olympics, a competitor must agree to observe and abide by guidelines and rules set forth by the NSAA.
2. Unified Sports and its parent-arm, Special Olympics, were created and developed to give individuals with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to train and compete in sports activities.

3. Eligibility for participation in Unified Sports:

- a. General Statement of Eligibility: Every person with intellectual disabilities who meets NSAA eligibility requirements outlined in the Constitution & Bylaws shall be eligible to compete.
- b. Age Requirements: Students must be in high school and meet the age requirements as shown in Approved Ruling and Interpretations 2.3.1 and 3.11.13
- c. Degree of Disability: Participation in Unified Sports training and competition is open to all persons with intellectual disabilities who meet the age requirement of this Section regardless of the level or degree of that person's disability, and whether or not that person also has other mental or physical disabilities, so long as that person registers to participate in Unified Sports as required by these general rules.
- d. Identifying Persons with Intellectual Disabilities: A person is considered to have intellectual disabilities for purposes to determining his or her eligibility to participate in Unified Sports if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements:
 - i. The person has been appropriately determined by an agency or professional as having intellectual disabilities as determined by such professionals (Individualized Education Program); or
 - ii. The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measure such as intelligent quotient or "IQ" testing or other measures which are generally accepted within the professional community in that Accredited Program's nation as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay; or
 - iii. The person has a closely related developmental disability. A "closely related developmental disability" means having functional limitations in both general learning (such as IQ) and in adaptive skills (such as recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care). However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on physical, behavioral, or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as athletes, but may be eligible as a partner.

The NSAA does not determine whether or not a person has an intellectual disability, but determines eligibility based on identification made by an agency, professional, and/or local school.

(Partner) Eligibility:

Though Unified Sports, Track & Field allows for partners with disabilities other than intellectual disabilities, Unified Sports® was developed to provide Special Olympics athletes with the choice of a sports program that brings about meaningful inclusion with their non-disabled peers. The desired objectives of a Unified Sports® experience are best fulfilled when partners on a team are individuals

without disabilities. Even though an individual with a disability may make an appropriate partner, schools should focus on forming teams that are not composed solely of people with disabilities.

Team Composition:

Schools may choose how many participants they would like to have on their Unified Track & Field team. Schools may also determine, locally, how many entries competing schools will be allowed in each event.

Entries should be comprised of equal (1 athlete / 1 partner OR 2 athletes / 2 partners (4*400 Relay)) representation of athlete and partner. Entries may be all boys, girls, or co-ed all competing against each other in the Unified Sports, Track & Field division.

Events/Team Composition:

100 M Dash: One athlete and one partner compete as a Unified team. Athletes will be heated/compete against each other, the same for partners.

Scoring: Each Unified team will have their times combined. The fastest combined time will be awarded 1st place and receive 8 points. (2nd Place = 7 points, 3rd Place = 6 points, ...8th Place = 1 point)

4*400 M Relay: Two athletes and two partners compete as a Unified team. The order in competition is as follows: partner 1, athlete 1, partner 2 and athlete 2.

Scoring: The 1st place relay team will receive 8 points. (2nd Place = 7 points, 3rd Place = 6 points, ...8th Place = 1 point)

Long Jump: One athlete and one partner compete as a Unified team. Athletes will be flighted/compete against each other, the same for partners. Each athlete and partner will get 3 long jump attempts.

Scoring: Each Unified team will have their best jumps combined. The best combined jump will be awarded 1st place and receive 8 points. (2nd Place = 7 points, 3rd Place = 6 points, ...8th Place = 1 point)

State Championship (Exhibition):

Member schools may submit individual Unified teams (1 athlete / 1 partner or 2 athletes / 2 partners (4*400 Relay)) from their school to participate, in exhibition, in the NSAA State Track & Field Championships on Friday, May 18, 2018. See the information below, in "Events," about qualifying. Times and jumps must be verifiable from any regular season track meet. Practice times and jumps cannot be used. All 100 M Dash, 4*400 M Relay and Long Jump submissions must be sent to the NSAA using the attached document (page 7). Entries are due to the NSAA office by **Thursday, May 10, 2018**.

Substitutions:

Substitutions to a qualifying State Championship "Unified team" may only be made if a participant is injured or physically ill. The same persons that qualify should compete at the State Championship.

Events:

100 M Dash: The 8 fastest, combined times (1 athlete / 1 partner) will qualify to participate at State. Two heats. Partners competing first, followed by athletes.

4*400 M Relay: The 8 fastest relay teams (2 athletes / 2 partners) will qualify to participate at State. One heat.

Long Jump: The 8 best, combined teams (1 athlete / 1 partner) will qualify to participate at State. Two flights. Partners competing first, followed by athletes.

Qualifying Tie Breaker: A coin flip will be used to break a tie for the final qualifying spot in any 2018 Exhibition State Championship event.

Schedule:

Friday, May 18, 2018

1:30 PM: Long Jump

2:00 PM: 100 M Dash (4x400 M Relay to follow 100 M Dash)

Awards:

There will be no awards given in the 2018 Exhibition State Championship events.

Reimbursements:

There will be no reimbursements to member schools for the 2018 Exhibition State Championship events.

Grant Money:

The NSAA and Special Olympics Nebraska intend to provide grant monies on a pro-rated basis for the 2019 Unified Track & Field season. Amounts will be based on the number of schools that participate and will be communicated at a later date.

2018 Unified Track & Field State Championship (Exhibition)
Qualifier Entry Form

Schools may submit entries throughout the Unified Track & Field season. Times and jumps must be verifiable from any regular season track meet. Times shall be submitted in FAT. Manual times must be converted (MT + .24 = FAT). Entry forms shall be emailed to Dan Masters (dmasters@nsaahome.org) or faxed 402-489-0934. **Entry forms are due to the NSAA office by Thursday, May 10, 2018.**

School: _____

100 M Dash: The 8 fastest, combined times (1 athlete / 1 partner) will qualify to participate at State. Two heats. Partners competing first, followed by athletes.

ATHLETE NAME: _____ ATHLETE TIME: _____

PARTNER NAME: _____ PARTNER TIME: _____

COMBINED TIME: _____

VERIFIABLE TRACK MEET/INVITE: _____

DATE: _____

4*400 M Relay: The 8 fastest relay teams (2 athletes / 2 partners) will qualify to participate at State. One heat.

ATHLETES NAMES: _____

PARTNERS NAMES: _____

TIME: _____

VERIFIABLE TRACK MEET/INVITE: _____

DATE: _____

Long Jump: The 8 best, combined teams (1 athlete / 1 partner) will qualify to participate at State. Two flights. Partners competing first, followed by athletes.

ATHLETE NAME: _____ ATHLETE BEST JUMP: _____

PARTNER NAME: _____ PARTNER BEST JUMP: _____

COMBINED JUMP: _____

VERIFIABLE TRACK MEET/INVITE: _____

DATE: _____