

# Unified Basketball

25-26 Rules and Regulations



***Special Olympics***  
New Jersey



# Unified Basketball Topics

**Special  
Olympics**  
New Jersey



- ✓ Participation
- ✓ Team composition & eligibility
- ✓ Competition format
- ✓ Competition options & season dates



# Participation - NJSIAA

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- All NJSIAA member schools are eligible to participate in Unified Basketball
  - Schools must declare/register their Unified Sports team\*
- Unified Basketball team records will impact neither varsity nor sub-varsity team records/standings
- Students may not participate in Unified basketball if they are participating in another strenuous sport during the same season
- Athletic Directors/Coaches should arrange games against other teams participating in the same level of Unified basketball
  - A four-game minimum by the cutoff date is **required** to compete in the post-season
  - Strongly recommend eight games by the cutoff date

# NJSIAA Eligibility



*ALL students participating must meet NJSIAA requirements and complete all NJSIAA required paperwork*

Athletes (students with [intellectual/developmental disabilities](#))

- Students must be enrolled in high school, but may compete up to 21-years-old
- Varsity level basketball players are NOT permitted to compete with Unified

Unified partners (students without intellectual disabilities)

- Varsity level basketball players are NOT permitted to compete with Unified

Coaches

- Unified Sports coaches will follow the certification standards as outlined by the [NJSIAA](#) with the addition of the [NFHS Coaching Unified Sports course](#)

# Team Composition



Special Olympics Unified Sports® were created to give individuals with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to train and compete in sports activities alongside their peers without disabilities.

- Teams should consist of about 12 players, approximately half Unified athletes and half Unified partners
- NJSIAA Unified Basketball rosters may carry 15 players
- Teams must start with and maintain a ratio of 3 athletes to 2 partners on the court at all times during competition
- Teams **should be co-ed**

# Principle of Meaningful Involvement

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- **Meaningful Involvement**

- Compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others
- Participate according to rules of competition
- Every player has the ability and opportunity to contribute to the success of the team

- **Things to Avoid**

- Display superior sports skills without involving other teammates
- Dominate most aspects of the game, especially during critical periods
- Lower your level of ability and effort dramatically or comically
- Tokenism – i.e., holding opponents or teammates back to repeatedly force an unopposed scoring opportunity for a less-skilled player

- **Player dominance applies to both partners AND athletes**

# Competition Rules - NJSIAA

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- The ball used for game play will be a 29.5 inch basketball. (NFHS Rule)
- All games will consist of four, 8-minute quarters, running time with the exceptions listed below:
  - The clock stops ONLY on foul shots and timeouts.
  - During the last two minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the clock stops on every whistle.
- **If overtime is necessary, the period is 5 minutes, running time.**
  - During the first 4 minutes of overtime, the clock stops ONLY on foul shots and timeouts.
  - During the last minute of overtime, the clock stops on every whistle.
  - Each team receives one additional full time out during the overtime.
  - Timing rules listed above are in effect for multiple overtime periods if needed.
  - Time outs earned in previous overtime periods do not carry over into additional overtime periods.

# Competition Format

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- Teams are allotted five (5) timeouts per game
  - Two (2) thirty second timeouts
  - Three (3) full (one minute) timeouts
- The bonus occurs in each quarter when a team picks up its 6<sup>th</sup> team foul
  - The bonus will always result in 2 free throws
  - Team fouls will be reset to zero at the beginning of each quarter
- During a free throw all players must wait until the ball hits the rim before stepping in
- In a free throw situation; there are no substitutions permitted until after the first free throw
- IAABO officials are used; therefore, IAABO rules are used to govern basketball games

# Post Season - NJSIAA



- 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.**
  - Post-season entries close 2/6/25
  - Contact Katie Telschow & Al Stumpf: [KMT@sonj.org](mailto:KMT@sonj.org) [astumpf@njsiaa.org](mailto:astumpf@njsiaa.org)
- All teams are entered on NJ.com for reporting
  - Home teams must report game results within 24 hours of end of game
  - Teams must have a scorekeeper and keep a scorebook for every game played during the season and tournament
  - Player specific stats should be entered on NJ.com by coaches throughout the season

# Post Season - NJSIAA



- Seeding will be based on power points from games reported to NJ.com and strength of schedule
- The BEST 8 games reported before February 14 at 11:59 pm will be included
  - Teams with less than 8 games will have 0 power points entered for missing games
- Teams will be seeded into two playoff brackets after
  - Round 1 games will be played at the higher seed between 2/6 and 2/28
  - Round 2 games will be played at the higher seed between 3/2 and 3/7
  - Semi-finals will be played at the higher seed between 3/9 and 3/11
  - Finals will be Saturday, March 14 and Sunday, March 15 at Rutgers' Jersey Mike's Arena

**DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ROSTERS IS Friday, February 6, 3 pm.**

**NJSIAA Unified Basketball Tournament Roster Submission**

**No modifications or changes to roster will be allowed after 2/6/2025**

# Unified Cup – High School

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- The Unified Cup is an invitational tournament
  - All teams may register but are not guaranteed a spot in the tournament
- Schools may have both a Unified Cup and NJSIAA team, but the same students cannot compete in both
- Roster maximum of 12 players
- Week of March 16 at MultiSports Kingdom, Manalapan  
(*paperwork due February 13, 3 pm*)
- Game play rules differ slightly
  - Games – two 20-minute halves, running time (except foul shots, timeouts, last two minutes of 2nd half)
  - Bonus occurs in each half on 7th team foul, always results in two free throws

# Middle School March Madness

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Students playing for the school basketball team are not eligible for the school Unified basketball team. Games in which they compete are considered forfeits.

- Week of March 16 at MultiSports Kingdom, Manalapan
- Roster maximum of 12 players
- Paperwork due February 13 at 3 pm
- **Game play rules differ slightly and may change based on number of teams playing**
  - Two 16-minute halves, running time (except foul shots, timeouts, last two minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> half)
  - OR Four 8-minute quarters, running time (except foul shots, timeouts, last two minutes of each half)
  - OR Two 10-minute halves, running time (except fouls shots, timeouts)
  - Bonus occurs in each half on 7<sup>th</sup> team foul, always results in two free throws

# Important Online Links



- [25-26 Interscholastic Unified Sports Registration](#) – Make sure to register!
- [Interscholastic Unified Sports Teams](#) – High School
- [Interscholastic Unified Sports Teams](#) – Middle School
- [Basketball Game Report](#) – please complete for each Middle School game
- High Schools, please report all games to NJ.com
- [NFHS Coaching Unified Sports Course](#)
- [NJSIAA Coach Accreditation](#) – NJSIAA Coach Requirements
- [Unified Basketball Info Page](#)

# Contact Information



## Unified Competition & general Unified Sports questions

- Katie Telschow

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- 609-896-8000 x264

## NJSIAA Unified Basketball Competitions

- Al Stumpf

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**Questions?**