



# Unified Sports Options

**A guide to Unified Sports options and alternate program ideas to promote inclusion and acceptance through sport, fitness and activity.**

## **Special Olympics Michigan Return to Play Guidelines**

Special Olympics Michigan is currently creating their return to play guidelines for Special Olympics Programming. When approved and a date for return to play is determined, these guidelines will be shared with all Unified Champion Schools. Unified Champion Schools will have to balance the Special Olympics Michigan Return to Play guidelines as well as the guidelines put forth by their school and the MHSAA.

SOMI's return to play guidelines will include: size of group practicing, social distance guidelines, monitoring of participant health and sanitization of equipment and PPE use.

## **Fulfilling the Unified Sports components**

We understand that fulfilling the Unified Sports component of Unified Champion Schools is going to be more difficult than ever this year. This guide was designed to help schools fulfill Unified activities through Sports, fitness, skills competitions, virtual activities and leadership based activities. Special Olympics Michigan staff will work each liaison to develop their Unified 'Sports' plan,

The following Unified Sports options in this packet will fulfill the Unified Sport component. We understand the need for virtual programming and want to find ways for schools to engage with each other while following safety guidelines.

## **Unified Sports Options**

### **Recommended Unified Sports that can be done in social distancing situations and in school**

Following Special Olympics International's low risk guidelines, the following Unified Sports offer the opportunity for students to participate in in-person competition while also following social distancing guidelines. It is SOMI's recommendation that groups remain small and cones or markers be used to keep students socially distant. Check the SOMI UCS [dropbox](#) for a link to suggested equipment and resources.

- Athletics (Track & Field)
- Horseshoes
- Bocce
- Snowshoeing
- Weightlifting
- Golf (net, group club set, practice balls, putting games)

### ***VIRTUAL BOCCE COMPETITION***

1. Teams Connect via zoom or other conference/video call to compete live.
2. Both teams deliver their Palina to start the game. Palinas should be equally distant from the fault line.
3. Team A and Team B both deliver all four balls alternating turns.
4. Measurements should be taken of all four balls.
5. Scores will be determined based on the measurement of all bocce balls for that round, using standard bocce scoring.
6. Teams play 10 rounds or 30 minutes.

\*\*Can also be completed with Horseshoes

### ***UNIFIED CROSS COUNTRY (DISTANCE RUNNING)***

1. Identify a safe and approved Cross Country course that is set for 1-mile and 5K races.
2. Unified Cross Country Relay features 2-person teams made up of 1 athlete and 1 unified partner.
3. The course is split into two halves. The partner or athlete runs the first half, when they reach the transition zone their paired partner or athlete then runs the second half. Due to social distance guidelines a baton is not used.
4. The final time (combined) is the score for the Unified Pair and will be used for final scoring.

### ***SOMI VIRTUAL GAMES***

Special Olympics Michigan is offering Virtual Games which includes Unified components. Virtual Games allow partners and athletes to train at home and to submit their scores in a virtual platform. Athletes and Unified Partners will be divisioned based on their age, gender and score. Virtual awards will be provided to those that participate based on their division. Virtual Games allow participants to enter their own scores online, or those without internet access can share their scores with a partner or UCS liaison and have them submitted for them online. Special Olympics Michigan hosted Virtual Summer Games July 19-25. Visit the Virtual Summer Games website [HERE](#)

### ***E-SPORTS***

E-sports (video games) are becoming a popular option for Unified Sports. E-sports bring together individuals through video and PC game options that use an online platform to connect individuals from anywhere. Special Olympics Michigan is currently looking into offering a Unified E-sports style tournament that would allow students to logon through their gaming system and to participate in a Unified format.

### ***INDIVIDUAL SKILLS CONTESTS***

Individual skills contests are traditionally individual events of a team sport that are to accommodate athletes with limited mobility and/or low motor abilities or new athletes who have not yet developed the skills necessary to participate meaningfully in team competition and athletes utilizing wheelchairs.

Unified Skills Contests pairs a Unified Partner and Athlete together as a unified pair in individual events allowing for social distancing. Equipment, if shared should be cleaned after each participant completes their turn.

1. Participants may not be assisted by coaches but can be assisted by their Unified Partner.
2. Modifications will be made for athletes who have visual or hearing impairments.
3. The final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the events for athletes and partners. Their combined score is the total score.
4. It is also suggested that the same volunteers remain at an event throughout the competition so that consistency is provided.

See a list on the next page of individual skills contests by sport.



**BASKETBALL - Individual Skills Level 1 & 2**

Level 1 Events Level 2 Events

Target pass 12 M Dribble

Spot shot Perimeter shooting

10 M Dribble Catch and pass

Speed dribble

**FLAG FOOTBALL Individual Skills Contest**

Run & Catch

Throw for Accuracy

Throw for Distance

Hand Off

Flag Pulling

**GOLF Individual Skills Contest**

Short Putt

Long Putt

Chip Shot

Pitch Shot

Iron Shot

Wood Shot

**POLY HOCKEY Individual Skills Contest**

Shoot Around the Goal

Pass

Shoot for Accuracy

**SOCCER Individual Skills Contest**

Dribbling

Shooting

Run & Kick

**SOFTBALL Individual Skills Contest**

Base Running

Throwing

Fielding

Hitting

**VOLLEYBALL Individual Skills Contest**

Overhead Passing

Serving

Passing (Forearm)

**Equipment should be sanitized between each participant**

**Participants should practice social distancing while waiting their turn to participate**

**All Skills event rules can be found by logging on to <https://www.somi.org/sports>, selecting your sport and clicking on the link to the sports rule book.**

## ***UNIFIED FITNESS OPPORTUNITIES***

Special Olympics Michigan offers a number of ways for students to participate in fitness activities that fulfill the Unified Sports component. Fitness opportunities can be done in person (PE Class, after school club, during class or as part of a sports practice/workout) or virtually. See how you can bring Unified Fitness to your students this year.

### **LEVEL 3**

#### **SOMIFIT**

SOMIFit is an 8-week fitness program that tracks athlete and unified partner fitness through a one-day per week curriculum. Students participate each week and take a lifestyle survey at the beginning and end of the program. Incentives are available for those participating in the program.

We are currently looking for at least 10 schools to start a SOMIFit program. The program can be run either in school as a teacher led program, or schools can join virtually and follow along with SOMI fitness staff weekly.

Contact your UCS Liaison to sign up and receive SOMIFit resources

### **LEVEL 2**

#### **[Fit 5](#)**

Fit 5 is a fitness initiative that can be introduced to regular practices or can be hosted as an individual fitness program that focuses on exercising 5 days a week, eating 5 fruits or vegetables a day and drinking 5 glasses of water daily. Fit 5 contains 5 levels of video activities focusing on endurance, flexibility, and strength. Digital versions of Fit 5 flash cards and the Fit 5 guide are also available here. The Fit 5 Guide includes additional information on healthy diet and lifestyle choices and guides to track individual progress.

#### **[WWE School of Strength](#)**

School of strength is a fitness program led by WWE Superstars Becky Lynch and Special Olympics athletes. The program is designed to be done 5 days a week to keep participants fit and healthy.

### **LEVEL 3**

#### **Walking Club**

Schools can set up a weekly in-person or virtual walking club and track student progress. SOMI has an approved walking club tracker that liaisons can fill out each week. Host a weekly check-in on student progress and celebrate milestones!

## **Unified Yoga**

Unified Yoga can be done in a socially distance in-person setting or can also be done virtually and allows for students to help lead exercises and classes. Students and educators can find basic yoga moves and lead them with students. As the Yoga program progresses add in more difficult moves and watch students improve as they go through the program.

## **Sit Up/Push Up Challenge**

This challenge can be done in two ways... 1. On day one, students count how many push-ups and sit-ups can be done in a designated amount of time (i.e. How many push-ups can be done in one minute?). Students then create goals for how push-up and sit-up counts in 30 days. Students practice at least 3 – 5 days per week and check in with each other on their progress. On day thirty, students count how many push-ups and sit-ups they can do in the same amount of time as the pre-test. Did they meet their goal? Celebrate growth and successes!

2. Unified students decide how many sit-ups and/or push-ups they can complete as a group in one month. Students work together to count sit-ups and/or push-ups, encourage each other to do more each day, and learn the value of teamwork and support. At the end of the month, students add up their group total and celebrate their work.

## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS MICHIGAN & MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

Special Olympics Michigan and the Michigan High School Athletic Association have partnered for the last four years to promote the growth of Unified Sports in the Michigan High School Athletic Association through education and Unified Sports exhibitions at championship level events. In 2019-20, 65 schools participated in interscholastic Unified Sports. Teams work with their athletic departments to schedule games against other schools in their athletic conference or league training within their school and competing against other schools.

Interscholastic Unified Sports provide students with and without intellectual disabilities the opportunity to represent their school and participate in a school athletic department environment while also promoting inclusion, acceptance and sportsmanship throughout their communities and schools. It's a win-win for both the Michigan High School Athletic Association member schools and Special Olympics.

## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS YOUNG ATHLETES**

Young Athletes is a play activities program designed for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2 – 7 years. Young Athletes not only promote sports skills growth, inclusion and understanding through play but is also proven to improve motor skill development for all participants. Designed to be hosted at home, in school and within their community, Young Athletes is flexible and can be hosted regularly in the classroom and at home. Learn more at [www.somi.org/youngathletes](http://www.somi.org/youngathletes)