

IHSAA UNIFIED SPORTS®

FLAG FOOTBALL 2019-20



UNIFIED SPORTS TEAMS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS® combines students with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team for sports training and competition. Special Olympics Indiana is considered a world leader in development of these programs having conducted the first-ever pilot test in 1989 and has since instituted competitions in virtually every sport.

- Teams consist of an approximately equal number of students with intellectual disabilities (Unified Student Athletes) and students without intellectual disabilities (Unified Student Partners).
- These distinctions will be for entry purposes only. There will be no identifiable distinction between participants in practice or competition.
- Teams are co-ed (all boys, all girls, or any combination).
- A school must certify all players on the sectional entry list but dress only 12 eligible players at each level of tournament. Schools may also play sub varsity games during the regular season.

UNIFIED SPORTS FLAG FOOTBALL BASICS

- Teams have no more than 3 Unified Student Athletes and 2 Unified Student Partners on the field at a time
- Safety is the primary consideration—flag football is a **NON-CONTACT** sport—stationery “screen blocking,” but no moving blocks; no kick offs or punts; no returns of fumbles or interceptions, etc.
- Games consist of two 20-minute halves (running clock except last minute) with 1 time out per team each half
- Unified Flag Football is played with a Wilson Youth football on a field that is 60 yards by 25 yards

SEASON DATES—Fall 2019

August 1st deadline for entering team for 2019 (Also limited to first 64 schools that apply)

- First possible date for practice—August 5
- Regular season—August 17- September 28
- Entry list deadline—September 27
- Sectional—Saturday, October 5 (8 teams, 3 games per team, 8 sites)
- Regional—Saturday, October 12 (4 teams, 2 game per team, 4 sites)
- State Finals—Saturday, October 19 (4 teams, 2 games, 1 site)

SCHOOL GRANTS

Up to 64 schools that participate in the 2019 IHSAA Flag Football Tournament will receive a grant of \$1500 from our partners at Special Olympics Indiana. The grants will be distributed by the IHSAA at the end of the season to those schools that participate in the tournament. Schools will need to provide all equipment, 2 sets of jerseys (home and away) and affix a patch provided by Special Olympics Indiana to all jerseys. An equipment & price list from a preferred vendor will be provided by SOIN.

GOVERNANCE AND RULES

For specific rules and regulations concerning this tournament check IHSAA By-Laws (Rules 200, 201, 203) and IHSAA Fall Bulletin 2019-20 (Unified Flag Football). Game rules were developed by Special Olympics and modified for use by the IHSAA and are available online at IHSAA.org > Schools > Coaches or by [clicking on this link](#).

ON-LINE RULES MEETING (COACHES AND OFFICIALS)

This will be available some time during the week of July 29.

IHSAA UNIFIED SPORTS® FLAG FOOTBALL RULES IN A NUTSHELL

200-1.0 Vision of Unified Sports®

The IHSAA/Special Olympics Indiana (SOIN) Unified Sports® project is to allow high school students with and without intellectual disabilities the opportunity to represent their high school in an IHSAA sanctioned activity by participating on a Unified Sports® team providing the students with a quality experience of sports training and competition.

200-1.1 Definition of Participants:

- a. Unified Student Athlete: A Unified Student Athlete is a student who is receiving special education and related services pursuant to an individual education program based on a cognitive, developmental and/or intellectual disability.
- b. Unified Student Partner: A Unified Student Partner is a student that meets the eligibility criteria outlined in General Eligibility rules 1-20, but is NOT identified by the school as a Unified Student Athlete.

Coaches:

In order to be eligible to coach Unified Flag Football a coach must meet the criteria necessary to coach an IHSAA sport under IHSAA By-Laws Rule 7, successfully completed the NFHS course on Unified Sports®, and attend Unified Sports® Flag Football rules training in person or on-line.

Fundamentals:

- All possessions, except following an interception, start at the offensive team's 5-yard line.
- The offense has four plays to cross midfield. Once the offense crosses midfield, they have four additional plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or score a touchdown in a prescribed number of plays, possession of the ball changes and the opposite team starts at their 5-yard line.
- The ball carrier may not spin, dive, hurdle, stiff arm, or use either arm to shield a defender from grasping his/her flag.
- The quarterback (player receiving snap) may NOT advance the ball beyond line of scrimmage
- Laterals are not allowed. All passes must be forward from behind the line of scrimmage and be caught beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Screen blocking is the only form of legal blocking that can be used by any player at any time.
- Dead Ball - play is ruled dead when the ball carrier's flag is pulled, loses his/her flag, steps out of bounds or any part of their body other than the hand or foot touches the ground; a receiver catches a ball without his/her flags attached, a pass is intercepted (no returns); or when a snap, pass, or lateral strikes the ground.
- There is no advance of an interception or fumble
- Fumbles - A ball fumbled by the runner is dead when it hits the ground and remains in possession of the offensive team (unless it is fourth down). If fumbled forward, the ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble. If fumbled backwards, it is marked where it hits the ground.
- The ball is spotted near the middle of the field for each down by the Referee
- The forward progress spot is the position of the ball when the player is declared down (carrier's flag belt is pulled or anything other than the runner's hand or foot touches ground).
- "No Running Zones" are located 5-yards before the midfield line and goal line. Any ball snapped from these zones must be passed. The purpose of "No Running Zones" is to avoid short yardage power running situations.
- Partners shall NOT dominate play (as determined by a Games Committee).
- A Unified Student Partner may NOT pass to another Unified Student Partner (to fully include Unified Student Athlete participation and prevent Unified Student Partner dominance).
- Partners MAY handoff to another partner.

Special Olympics Indiana will provide a price list from a suggested vendor for schools to purchase a starter kit (approximately \$500): pylons, multi-colored cones, boundary marker set, mouth guards, approved flag belts and equipment duffle bag.

IHSAA will provide 2 Wilson all weather youth footballs.

Schools will need to provide two sets of jerseys (home and away) and affix patches provided by Special Olympics Indiana.

IHSAA SPONSORED UNIFIED SPORTS®



FALL 2019

2nd ANNUAL IHSAA UNIFIED FLAG FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

SCHOOLS: Tournament consists of the first 64 schools that register a varsity team. Sub varsity may compete during regular season.

TEAM SIZE: A school must certify all players on the sectional entry list but dress only 12 eligible players at each level of tournament. Teams may have no more than 3 Unified Student Athletes and no more than 2 Unified Student Partners on the field at a time.

UNIFIED SPORTS® FLAG FOOTBALL BASICS

- Safety is the primary consideration—flag football is a NON-CONTACT sport—stationary “screen blocking,” but no moving blocks; no kick offs or punts; no returns of fumbles or interceptions, etc.
- Games consist of two 20-minute halves (running clock except last minute) with 1 time out per team each half
- Unified Flag Football is played with a #4 Wilson Youth football on a field that is 60 yards by 25 yards
- Game rules (developed by SOIN and modified for use by the IHSAA) are available at IHSAA.org > Schools > Coaches.

DATES: **Practice** may begin August 5; **Regular season**—August 17- September 27; **Sectional**—Saturday, October 5 (8 teams per site, 8 sites); **Regional**—Saturday, October 12 (4 teams per site, 4 sites); **State Semi-Finals and State Championship**—Saturday, October 19 (4 teams, venue TBD)

SCHOOL GRANTS: Special Olympics will provide \$1500 to all 64 schools that participate in the 2019 State Tournament. Grants will be distributed after completion of the season through the IHSAA.

ADAPTIVE MODIFICATIONS: When athletes or partners require the use of wheelchairs or other mobility assistance devices the school may apply to the IHSAA for special consideration for potential team members who require such assistance. Such requests will go to the Risk & Competition Committee of the IHSAA, in care of the Commissioner.

SPRING 2020

7th ANNUAL IHSAA UNIFIED TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP

SCHOOLS: Unlimited number of schools may enter varsity teams. Sub varsity meets/events may be held during the regular season.

TEAM SIZE: Tournament teams have a maximum of 12 Unified Students Athletes and 12 Unified Student Partners plus substitutes. Schools must enter an equal number of Athletes and Partners in each event. There is no minimum number of events or competitors in order for a school to enter the tournament. Schools are encouraged to compete in sub varsity/events meets during the regular season.

UNIFIED SPORTS® TRACK & FIELD BASICS

- Tournament events: 100m Dash, 400m Dash, 4 x 100m Relay (Boys'), 4 x 100m Relay (Girls'), Shot Put and Long Jump
- During regular season competitions schools are encouraged to include other traditional IHSAA track & field events
- Participants must have performance standards in a minimum of 2 competitions to be eligible in that event in the tournament
- Competitor maximum events per contest—4 regular season, 2 tournament

DATES: **Practice** may begin March 9; **Regular season**—March 23-May 22; **Sectional**—Saturday, May 23, sites TBD; **Regional**—Saturday, May 30, sites TBD; **State Finals**—Saturday, June 6, 2019, Indiana University.

ADAPTIVE MODIFICATIONS: When athletes or partners require the use of wheelchairs or other mobility assistance devices they may compete in the tournament in the shot put only. Wheelchair competitions may be included during the regular season with permission of the Commissioner if separate from all other competitions (i.e., exclusively wheelchair competition, no participants not in wheelchairs) and 2 lanes are assigned to each competitor.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS INDIANA SPONSORED UNIFIED SPORT®

Are you an IHSAA member school with not enough students with intellectual disabilities to enter a team?

NEW—SOIN OPEN DIVISION: You must still use your current students as “Partners.” But in this new Open Division you can combine with “Athletes” who are not current students. This might include individuals with intellectual disabilities who are middle school students, alumni, from another school (combining 2 or more schools) or even adults from the local Special Olympics program.

HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION: Teams must be comprised of both partners and athletes who are current students from your school (IHSAA eligibility rules apply).

FALL 2019

4th ANNUAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS INDIANA UNIFIED BOCCE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

SCHOOLS: Tournament may be limited to the first 16 schools that register. Additional schools as competition allows.

TEAM SIZE: Total 12--Boys, girls and coed teams with each consisting of 2 Unified Student Athletes and 2 Unified Student Partners.

UNIFIED SPORTS® BOCCE BASICS: Bocce is a sport similar to lawn bowling that can be played by people with a wide range of abilities. A complete set of rules will be provided to all schools. Also check, YouTube: “How to Play Bocce.”

DATES: Sectional, Saturday, 21 (4 Sites, TBD); **State Finals,** Saturday, September 28, 2018, Carmel High School, Murray Soccer Stadium (field turf).

ENTRY FEE: TBD

ADAPTIVE MODIFICATIONS: It is an easy sport and is open to all students. This includes students with significant physical disabilities and/or students who use wheelchairs. Adaptations can be made for those who have visual impairments. They cannot only compete, but they will become valuable members of your school’s team. Competitors may use ramps to launch ball.

WINTER 2019-20

3rd ANNUAL SPECIAL OLYMPICS INDIANA UNIFIED BOWLING HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

SCHOOLS: Tournament will be limited by the number of lanes at each venue. Each school may enter only 1 varsity team.

TEAM SIZE: The total size of the team is unlimited and unlimited substitutions are allowed between games. Total competitors allowed during each game is 15--Boys, girls and coed (at least 2 boys and at least 2 girls) teams with each consisting of at least 2 Unified Student Athletes and at least 2 Unified Student Partners.

UNIFIED SPORTS® BOWLING BASICS: Gross scores, NO HANDICAP SCORING, Baker system (Each team has 5 members. The first bowler rolls the 1st and 6th frames. The second bowler rolls the 2nd and 7th frames, etc.)

DATES: Sectional, Saturday, March 14, 4 Sites TBD; **State Finals,** Saturday, March 21, 2020, check in 12:00 noon; competition 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., Woodland Bowl, Indianapolis.

ENTRY FEE: TBD

ADAPTIVE MODIFICATIONS: It is an easy sport and is open to all students. This includes students with significant physical disabilities and/or students who use wheelchairs. They cannot only compete, but they will become valuable members of your school’s team. Wheel chair accessible, competitors may use ramps to launch ball, bumpers will NOT be used.