



Unified Track and Field Sport Rules

All Interscholastic Unified Track and Field events will follow North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) and National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) except where there are rules modifications set forth in the Official Special Olympics rules for athletics and/or SONC modifications of rules. This section is intended to be used in conjunction with NFHS, and SOI Rules; therefore, those rules are not repeated here but they will be enforced unless in direct conflict to SONC modifications.

Team Rosters and Eligibility

- Special Olympics Unified Sports® Track and Field teams should have a minimum roster size of 10 total participants. Unified Sports® is a co-ed program.
- The team composition should be a combination of students with intellectual disabilities, students with other types of disabilities, and students without disabilities. To promote an inclusive environment, the team must be composed proportionally of students with and without disabilities.
- Each team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the lineup and conduct of the team during competition.¹
- Students with and without an intellectual disability that are existing varsity track athletes at their school should not be on a Special Olympics Unified Track and Field team. If a varsity track athlete joins the Unified track team they are unable to compete in both traditional and Unified events when offered in conjunction with varsity track events.

Ex: If an athlete is running in the Special Olympics Unified Sports 400M then he/she may not also run in the 400M for the traditional track event. This applies when there are both varsity track and Unified track events included in a meet.

Official Events and Entry Requirements

1. Following are the official events offered at all Special Olympics Unified Sports® Track and Field competitions.²

Track Events

100 meters
200 meters
400 meters
800 meters
4 x 400 meter relay
4 x 100 meter relay

Field Events

Running Long Jump
Shot Put (6lb)

2. Participants may enter one individual track event and one individual field event. They also may be selected to participate on one relay team.³
3. Special Olympics Unified Sports® Track and Field teams are not required to enter participants in every event.⁴
4. For relay events, teams must consist of two Special Olympics athletes and two Unified partners. Coaches can place their runners in any order.⁵
5. A Special Olympics Unified Sports® Track and Field team may enter a maximum of two 4 x 100 meter relay teams and two 4 x 400 meter relay teams in a meet.

¹ SOI Athletics rules section 3.9.2.2

² SOI Athletics rules section 3.9.3

³ SONC modification of SOI Athletics rules section 3.9.3.5

⁴ SOI Athletics rules section 3.9.3.6

⁵ SOI Athletics rules section 3.9.3.7

General Event Rules

1. All track and field events will follow National Federation of State High School Associations rules except where there are rules modifications set forth in the Official Special Olympics rules for athletics and/or these SONC modifications.
 - In races up to and including the 400 meters, the runners have the option of using or not using starting blocks.
 - Only one false start per race shall be allowed without the disqualification of the athlete responsible for the false start. Any athlete responsible for further false starts in the race shall be disqualified.⁶
 - All runners should run within their lanes. If an athlete either runs outside his/her lane in the straight or runs outside the outer lane on the bend, with no material advantage thereby being gained, and if no other runner is obstructed, then the competitor shall not be disqualified.⁷

General Rules for Wheelchair Events

- To provide competition opportunities for athletes using wheelchairs, the 100m dash and shot put are offered.
 - Athletes shall start with all wheels behind the start line.⁸
 - A competitor using a wheelchair finishes his/her race when all front wheels (one or two) of the wheelchair reach the finish line.
 - The lanes used by wheelchair athletes should be made two track lanes wide.
 - Motorized wheelchairs shall not be allowed.⁹
 - Athletes shall not be pushed, pulled or otherwise assisted during these events.

Highlighted field event rules appearing in the Special Olympics rules book:

- All distances must be marked **using metric measurements**.
- In the shot put and running long jump, each athlete shall be allowed three non-consecutive attempts. All three attempts shall be measured and recorded for breaking ties. The longest measurement of the three attempts shall be used for scoring.
- **Running Long Jump**
 - Competitors may choose to jump from either the edge of the pit or the set takeoff board. Before making the first attempt the competitor must declare whether they will jump from the takeoff board or the edge of the pit to the event official. Jumpers may change which takeoff board or foul line they are using during competition, but only with the prior notification of the event judge.
 - Note: The takeoff board is typically set at 8ft. for men and women.
 - It is recommended by the Unified track & field sport development team that competitors with a jump distance of 12ft. or greater for men and 12ft. or greater for women jump from the takeoff board.
 - Prior to competition, an athlete may receive assistance from an official to mark their runway starting point.
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- Shot Put (points of emphasis)
 - All competitors will use a 6 lb. shot put¹¹
 - The wrist must be straight or rigid when putting the shot. If an athlete bends their wrist, the attempt will be deemed a throw and subject to being called a foul.
 - The shot shall be put from the shoulder with only one hand. The shot shall touch or be in close proximity to the neck or chin and the hand shall not be dropped below this position during the act of putting. The shot should not at any time be brought behind the line of the shoulder.

⁶ SOI Athletics rules section 3.1.6

⁷ SOI Athletics rules section 3.1.7.3

⁸ SOI Athletics rules section 3.4.3.1

⁹ SONC Modification of SOI Athletics rules section 3.4.3

¹⁰ SOI Athletics rules section 3.2.3.3

¹¹SONC modification of SOI Athletics rules section 3.2.6

- The competitor cannot touch the top of the iron band, stop board or painted circle.
- It is a foul if the athlete improperly releases the implement.
- The competitor must not leave the circle before the implement has landed.

Divisioning

- Competition is conducted in co-ed divisions composed of competitors with similar abilities. Divisions or heats consist of competitors with and without disabilities and are only determined by the participants' ability levels as expressed by qualifying times or distances.
- Qualifying times and distances for each competitor must be submitted in accordance with the meet registration deadline for the events in which he or she will be entered.
 - For example, if a participant will be entered in the 400 meters and the running long jump, qualifying scores must be submitted for each event.
 - Failure to submit qualifying times by the registration deadline will result in the competitor being placed in a heat/division at the discretion of the meet manager.
- The minimum number of competitors in a division should be three and the maximum number is eight. The same policy applies to the number of teams in a division at a larger invitational.

Team Scoring

- Every event competition division results in the same allocation of points awarded to the teams.
 - For example, if there are seven divisions or heats of the 100 meters, competitors in each of the heats will score points for their teams based upon their place of finish.
- The number of places to be scored for each division is: 1st place scores 5 points, 2nd place scores 3 points, 3rd place scores 1 point.¹²
- Adding together the total amount of points earned by the participants on each Special Olympics Unified Sports® Track and Field team determines the final team place of finish for the competition.
 - A scoring formula may be used to balance the inherent advantage teams with larger sizes may have. Notice of the use of a formula will be sent to coaches prior to the start of the meet.

Procedure for teams with different roster sizes¹³

- To balance the inherent advantage teams with larger roster sizes will have due to the increased number of entries that can score points, the following weighted scoring system will be used. This gives each individual performance a value which counterbalances any benefit gained by teams with more participants.
 1. In instances where **teams have a difference of more than five participants**, individual scores for smaller teams are multiplied by a weighted number to offset any competitive advantages gained by the larger teams.
 2. Scoring formula: largest roster/average of remaining rosters x total team score
 3. For example, there are 5 teams competing with roster sizes of 20, 11, 12, 13, and 10. Take the largest roster size (20) and divide it by the average of the other four teams (11.5). This calculation is 1.74 which becomes the scoring multiplier.

Example: School A has 20 participants: each individual's performance score will be 5 points for 1st place, 3 points for 2nd place, and 1 point for 3rd place.

 - a. For the remaining schools the individual's score on these teams will be calculated using the scoring multiplier. To apply that, take the individual point total based on place (5 points for 1st) and multiply it by the scoring multiplier (1.74). This will be 8.7 points for 1st place, 5.22 points for 2nd place, and 1.74 points for 3rd place.

¹² SONC modification of NFHS rule 2, section 1 article 2

¹³ SONC modification of SOI Athletics rules section 3.9.5.2