



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools**

Unified Track & Field Pre-Season Coach Webinar

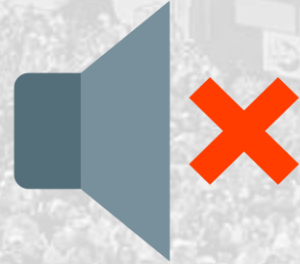
2023-2024





House Keeping

- Mute Yourself



- Drop You Questions in the Chat



- Share the Info



Agenda

- UCS Staff
- 2024 Updates & Reminders
- Team & Coach Requirements
- Events
- Divisions
- Dates & Deadlines
- Questions



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UCS STAFF



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Eastern	Central	Western
Traci Huddleson GLVPR	Doug Chuzie Northwest Region	Stephanie Taylor Three Rivers Region
Ashley Herr Greater Philadelphia Region	Lauren Saulter Capital Area Region Ridge & Valley Region UCS Senior Director	Hayden Miller UCCS Pittsburgh Public Three Rivers Region
	Kim Lope Northeast Region	





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2024 Reminders & Updates



General Updates



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- **Rule changes for this season**

- Track bottoms do not need to be SOPA issued but must match the school-issued track top's color (i.e. black shorts, black top). Loose-fitting bottoms or compression-style bottoms are permitted for boys and girls. Closed-leg briefs are acceptable for girls.

Points of Emphasis

During competition, coaches **cannot** provide hand-over-hand assistance or any physical guidance. For those athletes unable to pick up their shot put or mini javelin, coaches can assist by handing athletes their throwing implements. However, the athlete **must be able to put throw the implement independently on their own**. If they are unable to do this, the athlete needs to be in another, more appropriate event.

Points of Emphasis



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- Students participating in any running event must be able to independently walk/run at least 100 meters without help unless they have a visual impairment.
- Pacing is NOT allowed in any running event. Pacing is running alongside an athlete who is racing. Pacing is often done unintentionally by a fellow teammate, coach, support staff, etc. Running on the infield of the track by a teammate who is not in the race or next to an athlete by a teammate who is in the race are both examples of pacing.
- Pacing will result in disqualification of the competitor. Teammates can cheer for an athlete who is competing but cannot run alongside them. Teammates can spread out around the track but cannot move alongside the runner.
- Holding hands with another individual while running will also result in disqualification.



Post Season Advancement

- **118** schools are confirmed for competition this year.
- **8** schools will qualify for state competitions.
 - 12 participants (6ATs/6UPs) per team attend.
- Not all schools will participate in post season.
- Letter of Intent date & advancement criteria will be shared within the first half of March.
- Begin the conversations now with your teams to see if there is interest in advancing to states.



T&F Coach Guidebook

- A hard copy is at the printers and will be mailed to each school.
- Visit the SOPA website to view an electronic copy of the guidebook and additional track and field resources.

The handbook will contains:

- All of the rules & regulations!
- Diagrams and step-by-step directions on how to set-up and measure field events
- One page documents for Competition Management that provide set-up instructions and volunteer role assignments.

Measuring Guidelines



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All measurements are to be done in **METRIC**

Measuring Field Events

- All measurements are recorded in **METERS AND CENTIMETERS.**

Example: A long jump attempt that is 15 feet is recorded as 4.57 meters.





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Team & Coach Requirements



Coach Requirements



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- 12 - 24 team members - 1-2 coaches
- 25 - 35 team members - 3 coaches
- 35 - 40 team members - 4 coaches

Require Coach Trainings

- [Concussion Training:](#)
- [Unified Sports Training:](#)

Optional Coach Trainings:

- [General Orientation:](#)
- [Protective Behaviors](#)



Student Athlete Requirements



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Eligible students

- 9th to 12th grade; co-ed program
- Students up to the age of 21 who are still receiving services from the school district.

FOR THIS YEAR - students who are turning 22 who have opted in for an additional year of high school are ***not*** eligible to be on the roster

- *Any students returning to receive additional services from a school under section 1412(a)(1)(B) of IDEA (a student returning to receive services until their 22nd birthday) are not eligible to be on an Interscholastic Unified Sports team roster. These students are more than welcome to be team managers, part of an Intramural Unified Sports program, or members of the Unified club for as long as school policy allows.*

Required Roster Size:

- **12** (minimum) to **40** (maximum)

Students participating on a spring interscholastic sports team (including traditional track and field) **are NOT eligible** for the Unified Track and Field team.



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Roster Requirements

Proportionality: The team needs to have a *proportional number* of Special Olympics-eligible students (defined as having an intellectual disability, developmental disability including autism, or cognitive delay) and general education students.

While the ideal goal is 50% of the team as Special Olympics athletes and 50% of the team as general education students, ***the allowable minimum is at least 40% and no more than 60% for either group.***





Required Paperwork

PIAA/SOPA Medicals:

- All rostered participants are required to complete the PIAA Medical form.
- Your school should retain the PIAA Medical, as they would for any other varsity sport. You do not need to submit the PIAA Medical to SOPA.

SOPA Waiver

- Online waiver form - If under 18, parent/guardian must fill out. If over 18, student can fill out.
- Each team member must complete the SOPA Waiver to be listed as eligible on your team's roster. Coaches must also complete the SOPA Waiver.
- If you have a family without internet access, please let your liaison know so we can get you a paper copy of the form.



Waiver / Track Rosters

- **All participants** must complete a SOPA Waiver – A regionally Specific link was sent by your liaison. This form should be completed by families or guardians
 - Paper copies are available if needed – contact your SOPA Liaison
- **THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE NAMES ADDED TO YOUR ROSTER THIS YEAR**
- Roster links will be emailed to you by your SOPA liaison

Participant Type: Athlete, Unified Partner, Coach	First Name	Last Name	Gender	New/Returning	Grade in School	Birthdate
Athlete ▼	John	Smith	Male	New	9th	1/1/11
Unified Partner ▼	Jill	Jackson	Female	Returning	11th	1/2/22

Competition Tab:
names will auto-
populate here; you
can no longer
type names in

	Participant Type	First Name	Last Name
5			
6	Example		
7	Teammate 1	Athlete	John Smith
8	Teammate 2	Unified Partner	Jill Jackson
9	Teammate 3		

Individual Events Entry
Scores Tab: you can
change A or UP if
incorrect

Bib Numbers & Uniforms



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Bibs - One bib will be issued to each athlete per season. The same number must be used all year.

- If a bib number is lost, a paper one must be made with the same number that was originally issued.

Uniforms - Orders are due February 29th!

- New schools should order one uniform (jersey & short) per team member as listed on your roster; minimum of 12, max of 40
- Returning schools can order a maximum of 15 uniforms as needed based on your current roster
- Can order a maximum of 4 coaches polos. Recommended that you order 1 polo per coach

Equipment



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Your school is provided with the following equipment by SOPA when you are first brought onboard:

- Mini-javelin (400 grams)
- Shot put (6 lbs)
- Relay baton

If you are a returning school & are in need of replacement equipment, please let your liaison know NOW what you need & why.





Practices & Competitions

- There is a requirement for a minimum of **2 *after school practices each week***. Practices cannot be held during the school day.
- Schools are required to participate in a minimum of 3 regular season meets.
- Your school may participate in more than three regular season meets if you so choose; please have your AD let your liaison know if you are interested in more than three meets.
- Most regular season meets will be tri-meets (3 schools).



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EVENTS



Events Offered



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Track

- 100m
- 400m
- 800m

Field

- Shot Put (6lbs)
- Mini Jav
- Long Jump

Relays

- 4x100
- 4x400

Event Requirements



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Each team member *may only compete in:*

- 1 Track Event
- 1 Field Event
- 1 Relay Only (competitor or alternate)



Once registered - No team member can change events. They are required to compete in the same event the entire reason.



Event Requirements



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Relays – Two 4x100 meter teams & Two 4x400 meter relay teams

- 2 athletes & 2 partners are required
- You may have 1 alternate athlete & 1 alternate partner for each relay team (6 people total for each relay)
- Students can **ONLY** be one relay team, including as an alternate

Teams **MUST** remain the same for each competition.

- If 2 athletes and 2 partners are not present from the registered list of 6, then the team will not run.

Wheelchair Information



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Manual Wheelchairs:

- May compete in track events, relays and field events.
- May compete against students with and without disabilities.

Mechanical (power) Wheelchairs:

- May compete in track events and field events only (no relays).
- In Track events:
 - Will only be divisioned with individuals using mechanical (power) wheelchairs.



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DIVISIONS

(Competition Groupings)



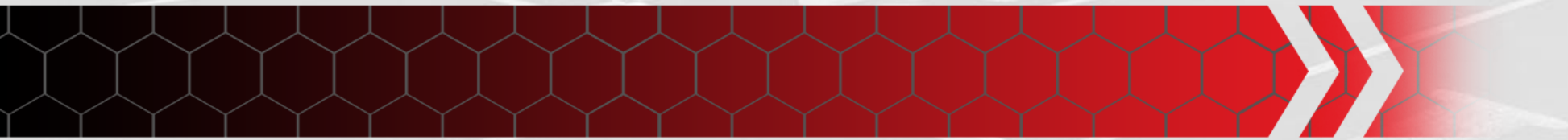
Divisioning



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Participants with and without disabilities compete against each other in co-ed competition divisions within each event.

- These divisions are determined by the entrants having similar qualifying times or distances.
- Co-ed, so there will be mixed genders in the same heats



Divisioning Continued



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Qualifying times need to be submitted to your liaison, by **March 20th** for each participant on your team.

- This enables the creation of equitable divisions for each event during meets.
- If you need a variation to this date, because of inclement weather, please coordinate with your liaison.

Time Trials scores will be entered on your roster tab called **Individual Events Entry Score**

					Time - Enter as Minute:Seconds.Milliseconds		Distance - Enter as meters.centimeters		Indicate Team of participation. Time entered on Relay Entry Score Tab	
	Participant Type	First Name	Last Name	Bib #	Track Event	Time	Field Event	Distance	4 x 100	4 X 400
Example				101		1:23.5		1.71	Team 1	
Example 1	Athlete	John	Smith		100 M... ▾	2:56.4	Shot Put ▾	2.33	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Example 2	Unified Partner	Jill	Jackson		400 M... ▾	4:30.7	Mini Jav ▾	7.54	Team 1 ▾	<input type="text"/>

Divisioning Continued



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After your first meet, the times and distances taken from competition will be what is used for divisioning for future meets.

- Times & distances are updated for each participant whenever improvements occur.
- If a student does not beat their scores from time trials, those original qualifying scores will continue to be used.

Ideally, the variance between the highest and lowest score in a competition division should be no more than 15 - 20%.

- However, this variance can be expanded in order to have fuller divisions of three or more competitors.

Divisions of One



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Individual Event or Relay:

- Scoring will be based on exceeding their qualifying time or distance.
- If qualifying time is beat (and the team member is not disqualified), 5 pts. will be awarded (comparable to 1st place).
- If they do not beat their qualifying time, 3 pts will be awarded (comparable to 2nd place).

This is the same rule we use for divisions of one in Motorized Wheelchair races.



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Additional
Info/Dates &
Deadlines



Dates and Deadlines



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- **Tuesday, February 20th at 3:30 pm** [Registration Link](#)
 - PIAA/SOPA Championship Webinar
- **Thursday, February 29th**
 - Uniform Order Deadline
 - [CLICK HERE TO ORDER](#)
- **Monday March 4th**
 - Track Practice Starts
- **Thursday, March 8th**
 - Coaches Quiz Due
- **Thursday, March 14th at 3:30 pm** [Registration Link](#)
 - Webinars – How to use the electronic score sheet / track management
- **Wednesday, March 13th**
 - Participant Waivers & Team Rosters Due
 - Each school enters their team members via link provided by SOPA liaison.

Dates and Deadlines



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March 20th

- Last date time trial information can be submitted - each school will conduct their own time trials and submit to their liaison
- If you need a variation to this date because of inclement weather, please coordinate with your UCS liaison

Week of March 25th - May 6th

- Regular season meets

April 1st Letter Of Intent DUE for all schools!

Week of April 29th - May 3rd

- Regional Championship
- State Qualifier Competitions

Weeks of May 13th – May 23rd

League Championships / Non State Events

Friday, May 24th – Saturday, May 25th

- PIAA State Championships



Coaches Quiz



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- All coaches must take this!
 - Open book quiz
 - We encourage you to use your Coaches' Resource Guide while taking this quiz.
- Quiz must be taken by: March 8th
Opens February 16th



Additional Reminders



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- Information on Meet Management & Electronic Scoresheet will be provided during the webinar on March 14th at 3:30 pm
- Specific details & requirements for post-season will be provided at a later date to all schools.
- Information on the PIAA/SOPA State Championships will be provided during the webinar on February 20th at 3:30 pm
- New Training Videos will be shared prior to the start of season.





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Questions

What's on your mind?

