

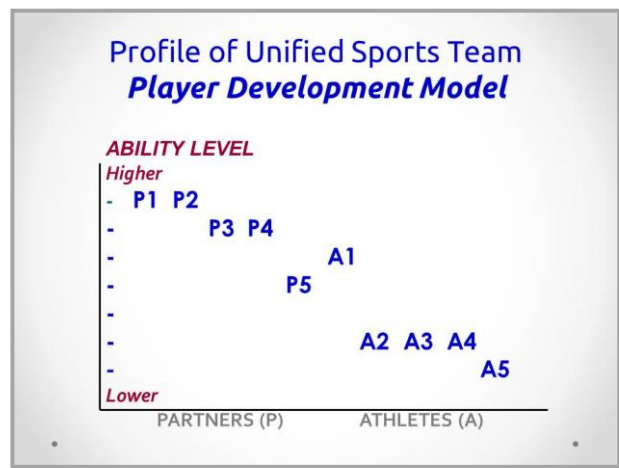
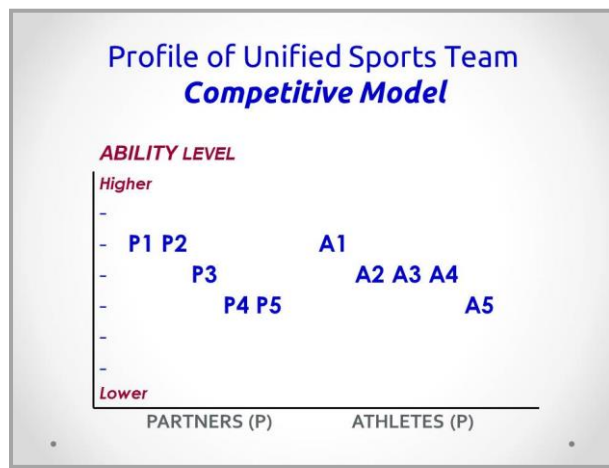


FALL 2015



Comparison between Unified Sports Competitive and Player Development Models

Unified Sports Competitive	Unified Sports Player Development
Inclusive sports program involving <u>persons with and without intellectual disabilities.</u>	Inclusive sports program involving <u>persons with and without intellectual disabilities.</u>
Approximately equal number of athletes and partners train and compete	Approximately equal number of athletes and partners train and compete
Similar ability and age of athletes and partners	Similar age
<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Have attained sufficient & necessary sport-specific skills and tactics 2) No modifications of Official Special Olympics Sports Rules 3) Eligible to advance to higher levels of play beyond the state level (such as out-of-state invitationals, National and World Games) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Differentiation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Not required to be of similar ability; teammates of higher ability serve as mentors to assist players of lower abilities 2) Rules modifications may define players' roles, ensure meaningful involvement and prevent player dominance 3) No advancement beyond the state level competitions
Promotes social inclusion by bringing teammates together in a setting where all are challenged to work together through a spirit of equality and team unity.	Promotes social inclusion by bringing teammates together in a setting where all are challenged to work together through a spirit of equality and team unity.
Awards based on place of finish within divisions	SOVA will provide awards based on participation (same award for all)



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**Important Information for Unified Sports Teams
On Competitive and Player Development Divisions**

On the state registration form for Volleyball and Soccer form there is a box for you to type or write in C or PD at the top that looks like this:

Competitive (C)
Or Player Development (PD)

If you are a Unified Team you must select one of the above options-- Player Development Level or Competitive Level. If your team has been playing in the Player Development Level locally and at Regional events, they should remain Player Development throughout the State Championships. Likewise if your team has been playing at the Competitive Level, they should remain in competitive divisions.

The only situation where a team’s level may change is if a Region Director or Event Staff at SOVA has advised you to change levels based on the available pool of teams in the tournament.

Background info: Special Olympics, Inc. published new guidelines for Unified Sports®, defining and differentiating between competitive and player development level teams. Competitive Unified Sports® teams are higher-ability teams comprised of athletes and partners of approximately equal ability levels. All players play to their highest ability level at all times. Player development teams are low to medium ability level teams that generally have partners who are higher skilled than the athletes. The partners serve as player mentors during competition and modify their play to accommodate the ability levels of the athletes. Below is further clarification of the two models:

Understanding Player Development Teams:

- 1) Teammates are not required to be of similar ability.
- 2) Teammates of higher ability serve as mentors to assist players of lower abilities.
- 3) Rules modifications define players’ roles.
- 4) Rules modifications ensure meaningful involvement and prevent player dominance.
- 5) Teams cannot advancement beyond the state level.
- 6) **Player Development teams receive Unified Sports® ribbons or medals rather than place ribbons or medals.**

Awarding a Unified Sports® participation ribbon/medal removes the incentive for partners to change the outcome of the game by elevating their playing level at critical moments. Even though players will still understand the final score of the game, partners will be less compelled to assist their team in ‘winning the gold.’ Using Special Olympics Unified Sports® medals for state competitions and ribbons for area/region competitions encourages players to adjust their play to promote meaningful involvement of players on all teams. The Competitive divisions will receive awards (ribbons and medals) based on their place with in their division (Gold, silver, bronze etc.)

Training on Unified Sports and the Models is available to your coaches. These trainings will include discussions about competition philosophy, meaningful involvement, player dominance, differentiating between competitive and player development teams, and rule modifications for player development teams. Contact Nancy Morehouse, Director Southwest Region and Unified Sports Specialist at nmorehouse@specialolympicsva.org for more information on coaches training. Coaches and partners are also encouraged to take the online course for Unified Sports hosted by the National Federation of High Schools at <http://nfhslearn.com/courses/36000>