

## BY-LAW ARTICLE XXXVI

### Unified Sports

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#### Philosophy:

The focus of NHIAA Unified Sports is competition (not simply participation). Sports teaches so many life lessons: to work as a team, to follow rules and to be committed. Through sports we can find shared interests that allow friendships to form. Through the NHIAA/Special Olympics Unified Sports program we have an opportunity to make real positive changes in the lives of students with and without disabilities.

We must have high expectations for students with intellectual disabilities because if we do not, we are teaching another generation of regular education students that people with intellectual disabilities can't follow rules or be held accountable and as a result they will not be viable members of their community or society in general.

**Sect. 1:** Unified Sports shall be administered by the NHIAA Unified Sports Committee and the rules of the National Federation will govern the sport when applicable.

#### Sect. 2: Introduction to Unified Sports

The vision of the joint NHIAA/Special Olympics sports project is to allow high school students with and without intellectual disabilities the opportunity to represent their high school by participating on a unified sports team providing the students with a quality experience of sports training and competition.

#### Sect. 3: Definition of Participants

- b. **Unified Student Athlete:** A student with an intellectual disability who, based on **his/her** IEP is expected to be in school in accordance to state law (RSA). (CM 11.22)
- c. **Unified Student Partner:** Any student that meets the criteria outlined in NHIAA By-Law Article II: Eligibility.

#### Sect. 4: Participant Eligibility

- a. **Age Requirement:**
  - i. **Unified Student Athlete:** A student with an intellectual disability who, based on his/her IEP may participate in Unified Sports as long as he/she is registered with the school.
  - ii. **Unified Student Partner:** Refer to NHIAA By-Law Article II, Sect. 1: Age of Contestant.
- b. **Scholastic Standing:**
  - i. **Unified Student Athlete:** Special Education Students: Students receiving service under I.D.E.A., 89:313, R.S.A. 186: C and related State Board of Education regulations, to include students receiving service pursuant to Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, may be declared academically eligible by their principal provided that all other eligibility requirements are met or is a registered student at a school working towards a diploma or certificate.
  - ii. **Unified Student Partner:** Refer to NHIAA By-Law Article II, Sect. 2: Scholastic Standing.
- c. **Semester Rule:**
  - i. **Unified Student Athlete:** Special Education Students: Students receiving service under I.D.E.A., 89:313, R.S.A. 186: C and related State Board of Education regulations, to include students receiving service pursuant to Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, may be declared academically eligible by their principal provided that all other eligibility requirements are met or is a registered student at a school working towards a diploma or certificate.
  - ii. **Unified Student Partner:** Refer to NHIAA By-Law Article II, Sect. 3: Semester Rule.
- d. **Medical/Physical Requirements:** Refer to NHIAA By-Law Article III, Sect. 2: Medical Statement or local school requirements; whichever are higher.

- e. **Restriction of Participation – Unified Student Partner:** Student athletes playing the same sport will be **prohibited** from competing as a unified partner in unified sports that season (with the exception of female volleyball players participating as a partner in unified volleyball). Appropriate participation for such a Student Athlete Partner may take place as an assistant coach or manager. Schools with limited enrollment or special circumstances may apply to the Executive Director for a waiver of this rule. (CM 11.2019)

**Sect. 5: Alignment of Sports:** Unified Sports teams in basketball, soccer, and volleyball shall be aligned in two divisions as co-ed sports. Unified track shall be aligned in one division as a co-ed sport. (CM 5.2017)

**Sect. 6: Officiating:** All sanctioned Unified Sports contests in soccer, basketball and volleyball will have a minimum of one (1) NHIAA enrolled official. Athletic Directors will obtain their own officials for the regular season and shall pay them the sub-varsity rate. Track & Field is still to be determined.

**Sect. 7:** Only member schools of the NHIAA will be permitted to participate either as a team or individuals.

**Sect. 8:** There will be offerings for the fall, winter and spring to be determined by the Unified Sports Committee. Minimally the sports of soccer and basketball will be offered during their respective season.

#### **Sect. 9: Tournament Selection**

The maximum number of teams allowed per By-Law Article IV: Classification: Sect. 10: Tournament Selection Requirements will qualify for the tournament in unified soccer, basketball and volleyball. (CM 1.2018)

**EXCEPTION: If 16 teams or less in a Player Development sport, all teams will make the post season. (Effective Fall 2023) (CM 11.2023)**

#### **Sect. 10: Tournament Rosters**

In all team sports: If a team is going to make the tournament, a team photo in uniform (no warm-ups and no mascots allowed) must be submitted with a photo lineup. If no photo is received a logo will be supplemented.

- a. Basketball: Each school will be allowed 21 individuals with no more than 18 of them being players in uniform.  
The remainder of the roster will include one (1) head coach, one (1) assistant coach and one (1) manager, the principal and athletic director.
- b. Soccer: All tournament teams will be limited to a maximum of 18 players and two (2) coaches.
- c. Volleyball: All tournament teams/rosters will be limited to a maximum of 18 players and a maximum of three (3) non players.

**Sect. 11: Awards:** Official NHIAA championship and runner-up plaques, in addition to individual medals/ribbons, the number to be determined by sports at the recommendation of the Unified Sports Committee and approval by the NHIAA Council.

In all sports an Official NHIAA championship and runner-up plaques as well as the following

- a. Basketball: 21 team medals will be awarded to the respective champion and runner-up teams in each division for boys and girls.
- b. Soccer: 20 teams medals will be awarded to the respective champion and runner-up teams in each division for boys and girls
- c. Volleyball: 21 team medals, will be awarded to the respective championship and runner-up teams in each division for boys and girls.
- d. Outdoor Track: six (6) ribbons will be awarded to the top six (6) finishers in the finals of each event, including relays.