



2020 BASKETBALL SEASON OVERVIEW

Sport Offerings

- 3 on 3 (*Juniors and Player Development Only*)
- 5 on 5

Team Types

- Traditional team play
- Unified Sports team play
- Unified Player Development team play

Registration

- Programs **must** abide by registration deadlines. **Programs that do not meet registration deadlines will not be eligible to compete**
- In order to attend any event or practice all participants must have up to date forms and/or certifications on file with Special Olympics Massachusetts by published deadline
- See deadlines on page 5

Waivers

In order to advance to a State level season ending tournament all participants must compete at an assigned qualifier. No team waivers will be granted. Individual's waivers may be requested through SOMA in advance of qualifier. SOMA will review all requests and approve or deny based on information provided.

Sport Resources

A variety of coaching resources are available for download at the Special Olympics [sport resource page](https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials) (<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials>). These include

- Sport Essentials
 - Article One / Coaching S.O. Athlete / Sport Rules / Coaching Guides / Athlete & Coach Development Models
- Unified Sports
 - Online Certification Course / Unified Sport Models / Team Assessment Tools / Principles of Meaningful Involvement / Tutorial Videos / Unified Guidelines

Safety

It is the responsibility of Special Olympics to look out for safe and well-being of all of our participants and to manage any and all potential risks, which may result or cause an injury a participant. With that in mind, Special Olympics does not allow the following in the sports of Basketball

- Wheelchairs / Walkers, crutches, canes / Boots / Hard casts / Jewelry
- According to SOI rules religious head gear must be documented prior to tournament play and meet safety standard



Rosters Composition 3 on 3

- Roster size for all teams must fall within the Minimum and Maximum player limits.
 - Minimum roster size – 4 players
 - Maximum roster size – 5 players
- All participants on roster **must** be of similar age. Guidelines are as follows
 - 8-15 years old
 - 16-21 years old
 - 22+
- Participants may only jump one age group.
 - Special Olympics MA will be monitoring ages on rosters and will contact programs if there are large disparities of ages on a team's roster
- Teams age group is determined by oldest player on roster at time of season ending tournament
- Unified Basketball Rosters **MUST** have a minimum of 2 Unified Partners and may not exceed a 50:50 ratio
 - On court 2 athletes an 1 Unified Partner at all times
 - Unified Teams that do not meet this criteria will be contacted by Special Olympics MA and will be switched to a Traditional team

Rosters Composition 5 on 5

- Roster size for all teams must fall within the Minimum and Maximum player limits.
 - Minimum roster size – 8 players
 - Maximum roster size – 15 players
- All participants on roster **must** be of similar age. Guidelines are as follows
 - 8-15 years old
 - 16-21 years old
 - 22+
- Participants may only jump one age group.
 - Special Olympics MA will be monitoring ages on rosters and will contact programs if there are large disparities of ages on a team's roster
- Teams age group is determined by oldest player on roster at time of season ending tournament
- Unified Basketball Rosters **MUST** have a minimum of 4 Unified Partners and may not exceed a 50:50 ratio
 - Unified Teams that do not meet this criteria will be contacted by Special Olympics MA and will be switched to a Traditional team



Uniform Guidelines for Basketball (*Participants & Coaches*)

- Players
 - Rule 6.5 of Special Olympics rule book (*page 13*)
 - Jersey- All uniform tops **must match** (*Same color*) that properly includes Special Olympics MA logo. Jersey must have #'s on back (*preferred to have numbers on front and back*)
 - Undershirt - If players wear undershirts everyone on team must wear same color undershirt and match uniform
 - Shorts – all players must wear shorts that are identical in color & trim jersey.
 - SOMA will allow a different solid color, like black provided that all players are in the same color shorts
 - SOMA will allow Athletic pants, sweatpants or yoga pants that meet guidelines above
- Coaches
 - Special Olympics Massachusetts branded Gear or dress shirt
 - Khaki Pants or shorts or black sweat pants. No ripped jeans or jean shorts

Website / Event Info

- All Events are posted to the calendar page Special Olympics MA website.
 - Due to the large # of events scheduled, Community Games assignments will be posted on the Winter Season Resource Page of the Special Olympics MA website
 - This will be continually updated throughout the winter season, check back regularly
- Event pages will include:
 - Programs assigned to event
 - Event timelines
 - Event contact Information and On site leaders
 - Lane assignments and divisions (*once finalized*)
 - Weather policy
- Winter Season Resource Page
 - Links to events
 - Sport rules
 - Registration form

Levels of Competition

- Community Games
 - Community Games are local tournaments where Special Olympics Massachusetts partners with local College or Partner to host event
 - Games are recreational based and are avenues to create more competition opportunities for teams
 - All sites are scheduled in a round robin format.
 - Community Games sites are schedule throughout the winter season from December – March
 - Team are assigned to a community game site. Teams must attend their assigned community game in order to be eligible for advancement to State Games
 - No awards are given at community games
 - Community Game assignments can be found on the Winter Season Resource page of the Special Olympics MA website.
 - Site is regularly updated



- Qualifying Tournament
 - In order to advance on to State Winter Games teams in the following levels must participate in a qualifying tournament
 - Traditional & Unified Seniors ages 16- 21
 - Traditional & Unified Masters ages 22+
 - Medals and ribbons will be awarded based on team's placement with in their division
 - Qualifying tournaments will be offered in February are intended only for those teams that would like to advance onto Winter Games in March

- Season Ending State Tournaments
 - Final Tournament offering hosted by Special Olympics Massachusetts. SOMA offers three (3) season ending tournaments for the sport of basketball
 - Juniors Tournament
 - All eligible teams in this age group advance
 - Unified Sports Player Development Tournament
 - All eligible teams in all three ages groups advance
 - Winter Games
 - Criteria to attend: Basketball teams in the traditional and Unified seniors and masters age groups and must have competed at a Qualifying tournament and received a pre-determined award. No team waivers will be granted
 - Have attended all assigned competition events
 - Medals and ribbons will be awarded based on team's placement.



2020 BASKETBALL SEASON CALENDAR

- **Registration Deadlines**

- 2020 Team Indentations due – December 4, 2019
- Qualifying Tournaments – January 8, 2020
- Season Ending Tournaments – February 12, 2020

- **Community Games**

Due to the large # of community game (*local events*) all venue assignments will be posted to the [Winter Season Resource page](#) of the Special Olympics MA website. This section of the website will be updated frequently throughout the winter season. Programs will also be notified via the bi weekly local program dashboard when the assignments are posted. Individual event schedules will be sent via email to assigned teams

- **Qualifying Tournaments**

- Rivers School, Weston – January 26, 2020
- Weston High School – February 2, 2020
- Bridgewater Raynham High School, February 8, 2020
- Stonehill College, Easton – February 8, 2020
- Babson College, Babson Park – February 9, 2020

Teams will be assigned to a qualifying tournament site after the January 8th registration deadline

- **Season Ending State Tournaments**

- Juniors Tournament
 - St Marks School, Southborough – March 1, 2020
- Unified Player Development
 - Fay School, Southborough – March 1, 2020
- Winter Games
 - Greater Worcester – March 7 & 8, 2020



DIFFERENCES IN UNIFIED SPORTS MODELS

Special Olympics Massachusetts would like to take this opportunity to review Unified Sports© models and how it affects your basketball team.

We offer two level of Unified play for which your team can register for:

- Unified Sports
- Unified Sports Player Development

Unified Sports Player Development:

The purpose of the **Unified Sports© Player Development Level** is to promote the growth of Special Olympics athletes particularly in the skills of the game (*shooting, passing, dribbling, rebounding, etc.*). The Partners' role is to be a mentor/coach/educator on the court in the spirit of Special Olympics Massachusetts and in the spirit of sportsmanship.

The Player Development Level is for lower skilled &/or younger athletes. It is intended for developmental teams in which the **emphasis** is to develop skill level and learn the basics of team play. In the Player Development Level, skills of the game, game flow, game situations, and game expectations are to be taught to the athletes so they can eventually be ready for Unified Sports or Traditional Sports play.

All rules of the game apply in this model and all players on the team are expected to contribute to the outcome of the game, play the game as it is intended to be played and honor the spirit/integrity of the sport

Unified Sports:

The emphasis for the **SOMA Unified Sports® Level** is to provide opportunities for training and competition at an ability level that provides alternatives to and possible gateways into community based competitions. The Unified Sports® Level provides opportunities to increase understanding of positional and team play and further continue to develop the skills needed to play. The higher athletic ability (*skill and understanding*) Special Olympics athletes benefit from the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of sports competitions.

What is the difference between these two levels?

The difference comes down to the **ability level of the athletes.** In the **Unified Sports Level** the partners and athletes on the team are viewed as equals and both have the same responsibilities on the field or court. The partners and athletes play the game as it is intended to be played athletes have an understanding of game flow and situations. Teams are divisioned based on ability with higher more competitive teams in the upper divisions (*partner and athlete with high skill set*) and the lower less competitive teams in the lower divisions (*less partner involvement, more athlete driven, lower skill sets*). In the Unified level you will see a vast range of teams and involvement of the partners from division to division.

In the **Unified Sports Player Development Level**, the partners serve as on court coaches and mentors to the athletes. The player development level is for lower skilled &/or younger athletes. **It is intended for developmental teams in which the athletes are learning the flow of the game, skills needed to be successful and the expectations of the game.**