



**Special
Olympics**
Massachusetts



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Massachusetts

Basketball Sports Rules



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Section A. Equipment & Uniforms

1. Team Uniform

- a. All players must wear uniform shirts of the same dominant color (*front and back*). Shirts must have approved Special Olympics Massachusetts logo and branding.
 - i. Shirts must be numbered both front and back
 - ii. No two players on a team can wear the same number
 - iii. Teams shall use numbers 0 and 00 and from 1 to 99
- b. All players must wear athletic shorts with no pockets of the same dominant color, but does not need to match the tops.
 - i. Players that are not in matching team uniform will not be allowed to compete.
 - ii. Players that enter the game without proper uniform will be removed from competition and the offending team will be assessed a technical foul.
- c. Uniforms must meet all Special Olympics Massachusetts guidelines and logo usage
 - i. No uniforms may have sponsorship or advertisement of any kind
- d. Players must wear athletic shoes (*Basketball shoes preferred*)
- e. Players may not wear any headwear with the exception of religious coverings.
- f. The following **are not** permitted in competition:
 - i. Finger, hand, wrist, elbow and forearm guards, casts or braces made of leather, plastic, pliable (*soft*) plastic, metal or any other hard substance, even if covered with soft padding.
 - ii. Objects that could cut or cause abrasions
 - iii. Headgear, helmets, jewelry, wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches
 - iv. Any other coverings, braces or equipment must be approved by the Head Referee and Staff/Management Team Member.
- g. The following **are** permitted in competition:
 - i. Knee braces if they are properly covered.
 - ii. Protector for an injured nose, even if made of a hard material.
 - iii. Mouth guard.
 - iv. Spectacles, if they do not pose a danger to other players.
 - v. Headbands, compression sleeves, compression stockings and wristbands



2. Competition Equipment

a. Basketball

- i. All Senior (15-21) and Masters (22+) Divisions will use size 7 (29.5 inch) basketballs
 1. Junior's (8-15) can use either a size 7 (29.5 inch) or a size 6 (28.5 inch)
- ii. All game balls must be inspected and approved by the Head Referee

b. Court

- i. Court must be clearly marked and free of obstructions
- ii. Three point lines - Three point will be awarded **only** if all courts within the venue are clearly defined/marked. If any court in the venue does not have a defined three point line no courts will be awarded three point shots
- iii. A form of seating will be provided for both teams- benches or chairs
- iv. Coaches must remain by their team bench and cannot coach the entire sideline.
 1. Coaches and team chaperones may not coach at the baseline or shadow players
- v. Courts will have a scoring table that will be staffed by volunteers
 1. Teams must submit complete rosters prior to the start of the game clearly marking athletes & Unified Partners with their appropriate uniform number.

Section B: Game Format and Timing

1. Length of Game

a. Local Competition/Community Games or Recreational Competition

- i. Games will be scheduled in 45 minute game blocks
- ii. Teams will play two equal halves of 15 minute running time
- iii. The clock will stop during the final minute of each half, during all timeouts and at the discretion of the referee or Games Management Team/Staff

b. State Qualifying Tournament

- i. Games will be scheduled in 45 minute game blocks
- ii. Teams will play two equal halves of 15 minute running time
- iii. The clock will stop during the final minute of each half, during all timeouts and at the discretion of the referee or Games Management Team/Staff

c. Season Ending Tournament

- i. Games will be scheduled in 60 minute game blocks
- ii. Teams will play two equal halves of 17 minute running time
- iii. The clock will stop during the final minute of each half, during all timeouts and at the discretion of the referee or Games Management Team/Staff



2. Ending a game
 - a. Coaches must verify and sign correct score on score sheets at the scorer's table at the conclusion of each game.
 - b. Any score discrepancy must be resolved at that time. If a coach does not verify and sign the score at this time, the score turned in by the scorekeeper will stand.

3. Overtime and Tied Games
 - a. Local Competition/Community Games or Recreational Competition
 - i. Game will end in a tie
 - b. State Qualifying Tournament
 - i. Game will end in a tie
 - c. Season Ending Tournament
 - i. If the division is a round-robin format the game will end in a tie
 - ii. If the division is playing seeded bracket play during the two day tournament
 1. During seeding play (*round robin format*)- Game will end in a tie
 2. During medal play (*Seeded advancement format*) - Teams will play a 5 minute overtime period until a winner is declared. Teams will be given 1 timeout that can be used during overtime. Previous unused timeouts **do not** carryover

4. Games lost by Forfeit
 - a. A team will forfeit a scheduled game if they are:
 - i. Not present for competition
 1. Local/ Community or Recreational Game or State Qualifying Tournament- More than 5 minutes late for the scheduled game block
 2. Season Ending Tournament- More than 10 minutes late for the scheduled game block
 - ii. Team cannot field the appropriate number of players
 1. Unified teams must have a minimum team composition of 2 athletes and 2 Unified Partners on the court to remain eligible for competition
 - iii. Team refuses to play after being instructed to do so by the referee or Management Team/Staff
 - b. Forfeited score will be recorded as 15-0 for point differential. Any team with a forfeit loss in their record will automatically lose the tiebreaker.



5. Timeouts

a. Timeouts

- i. Each team will be allowed four 30-second time-outs per game
 1. Each team will be allowed 2 time-outs during the first half and 2 time-outs during the second half. Unused time-outs do not carryover.
- ii. The referee may call a player injury timeout
- iii. The referee or Management Team/Staff can stop the clock at his/her discretion and is advised to do so at any time. *For example allowing the clock to run when the ball bounces well out of play gives one team an unfair advantage. In this case the clock should be stopped.*
- iv. Officials will grant a player or coach an oral or hand signal request for time-out
 1. To call a timeout the team must have established possession of the ball or during a dead ball situation

6. Substitutions

- a. Teams may **only** substitute players during a substitution opportunity. These opportunities are:
 - i. The ball becomes dead and play is stopped
 - ii. The ball becomes dead following a successful last or only free throw
 - iii. During a time-out. If substitutions are made during a time-out they must report to the scoring table prior to entering the game.
- b. When the venue is equipped the scoring table will sound the signal to notify officials that there is a substitution.
- c. Teams are expected to substitute in a timely manner. If in the judgement of an official, there is a delay of game, a time-out shall be charged against the offending team. If the team has no time-outs remaining a technical foul for delaying the game may be charged against the coach.
- d. Substitutes must wait near the scoring table at the nearest end of the bench to not obstruct play until the substitution period is granted
- e. If a team substitutes during play and does not wait until a substitution opportunity the official will stop play immediately and assess the coach a technical foul
- f. If the free throw-shooter must be substituted because he/she:
 - i. Is injured
 - ii. Has committed their 5th foul
 - iii. Has been disqualified
 1. The free throw(s) must be attempted by the substituting player.



Section C: Competition & Modifications

1. Gameplay
 - a. Teams are required to have a **minimum** of 4 rostered players in order to start a scheduled competition.
 - b. All rules will be enforced with exception of the below modifications
 - i. Traveling- Player may take two steps beyond what is allowed before they are called for travelling
 1. If the additional steps allow the player to gain an advantage such as escape a defender or score a travel should be called immediately
 - ii. Three Point Shots
 1. Three point will be awarded **only** if all courts within the venue are clearly defined/marked. If any court in the venue does not have a defined three point line no courts will be awarded three point shots
 - iii. Full Court Press
 1. Teams competing in the Juniors (8-15) Division **cannot** run a full court press
 2. Teams competing in all Seniors (15-21) and Masters (22+) Divisions can run a full court press
 - iv. Game Timing
 1. Game clock will be running time until the last minute of each half
 - a. Length of games are detailed in Section B.1
 2. Clock will only stop for time-outs and at the officials discretion
 - v. Fouls
 1. Players are allowed 5 fouls per game.
 2. Once a player commits their 5th foul they will be removed from the game

Section D: Team Registration and Advancement

1. Registration
 - a. Teams must submit a complete registration on or before the established deadline for the Winter Sports Season.
 - i. Complete Registrations contain:
 1. Team Roster with all athlete, coach and unified partner information
 - a. Teams must submit teams with unique team names. For example teams cannot be named Boston Patriots, Boston Patriots 2
 2. Team Rating Form complete for all participants on the team.
(*Summary page only*)



- b. Rosters limitations
 - i. Rosters must have a **minimum** of 8 and a **maximum** of 15
 - 1. *Unified Sports teams must have a **minimum** of 9. See Section E: Unified Sports for details.
 - c. Registrations can be sent to the Special Olympics Massachusetts Operations Department
 - i. Ops@SpecialOlympicsMA.org
 - d. Teams that do not submit the appropriate materials by the established deadline will be ineligible to advance through levels of competition.
2. Advancement
- a. Teams must meet established criteria to remain eligible to advance through levels of competition.
 - i. Meet all established deadlines for paperwork
 - ii. Certified Head Coach
 - 1. Teams must have a non-playing fully certified head coach
 - iii. Compete at assigned Community Games and Local Invitational Competitions
 - iv. Attend assigned Qualifying Tournament and compete within assigned division.
 - v. Place in the top two of the assigned division at the Qualifying Tournament

Section E: Unified Sports

- 1. Roster Composition
 - a. Teams must submit a roster with a **minimum** of 9 and a **maximum** of 15.
 - b. Teams must have at **minimum** 4 Unified Partners
 - i. Teams that do not meet this minimum will be moved to compete in Traditional Basketball
- 2. Team Composition- On the Court
 - a. Unified Sports teams are expected to follow the 50/50:60/40 rule and will at all times have their lineup on the court be 3 athletes and 2 Unified Partners
- 3. Rule Restrictions
 - a. There are **no** rule restrictions or modifications made for Unified Sports divisions
 - b. Teams are expected to play as a team and have all members contribute in a meaningful manner
 - c. If a team elects to place restrictions on their players this is a coaching philosophy. This coaching philosophy and style of play **does not** need to be followed by the opposing team



4. Unified Sports Player Development

- a. Unified Sports Player Development is a training model for athletes to progress their skills through gameplay
- b. In this format of Unified Sports the Unified Partners are commonly at a higher skill level than the athletes and are expected to aid in the facilitation of the game
- c. There are **no** rule restrictions on what partners and athletes can and cannot do during competition.
 - i. If a team elects to not allow their Unified Partners to shoot this is a coaching philosophy and the other team is **not required** to play under these rules.
- d. Competition Modification
 - i. A 3 second rule will be enforced on both offense and defense. This rule is to create movement and avoid having a player dominate all rebound opportunities