



AIA UNIFIED SPORTS®

Unified Sports® is an inclusive program, which combines individuals with intellectual disabilities (unified athletes) and individuals without intellectual disabilities (unified partners) on sports teams for training and competition. Athletes and unified partners compete alongside one another, each in a meaningful and integral role on the Unified Sports® team.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In June of 2011, a partnership was formed between Special Olympics Arizona and the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) with the sole purpose of building a statewide Unified Sports® structure within the state's interscholastic athletics system.

Through participation in AIA Unified Sports, students with and without intellectual disabilities are able to gain a true high school athletic experience. Similar to any other high school sports team, Unified Sports teams are managed by the school's athletic department, and both unified athletes and unified partners are eligible to receive high school athletic letters through participation.

STUDENT ATHLETE BENEFITS AND RECOGNITION

Participation in AIA Unified Sports empowers unified athletes and unified partners to gain a true high school athletic experience by providing opportunities to:

- Build confidence through success and positive interactions with peers
- Experience being part of a team through engagement in an inclusive environment that promotes camaraderie, competition, sportsmanship, and lifelong friendships
- Achieve excellence and recognition in interscholastic athletics and activities
- Represent their school with legitimacy and pride by wearing school name/colors and competing in the prominent arena of high school athletics and activities alongside their peers
- Participate in regular season league play with other AIA Unified Sports teams
- Compete in AIA-sanctioned tournaments, such as invitationals, sectionals, and state championships
- Be eligible to receive JV and Varsity letters for participation in high school athletics and activities
- Promote academic and social support in the classroom, in the hallways, and the overall school environment and community

SANCTIONED AIA UNIFIED SPORTS®

The following sports / activities are sanctioned as AIA Unified Sports® –

- | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| - Badminton | - Basketball | - Flag Football | - Floorball | - Golf |
| - Robotics | - Soccer | - Spiritline (Cheer) | - Swimming | - Track and Field |

For more information, please contact:

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EXPLANATION OF PARTNERSHIP

Special Olympics Arizona provides opportunities and resources for student learning, professional development, and administration of programs. We recognize the importance of school endorsement and involvement in the success of this program. Our goal for this partnership is to meet the needs of the school as well as lay the foundation for future collaboration between Special Olympics Arizona, the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA), and school districts across the state.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ARIZONA (SOAZ) PROVIDES:

- Inclusive sports and extra-curricular sports programs for students of all abilities,
- Professional development and teacher training,
- Assistance with funding of programs,
- Access to Special Olympics Arizona corporate sponsorships, volunteers and education related grant funding, as well as event opportunities and sponsorship,
- Special Olympics Arizona staff and volunteer leadership dedicated to development, implementation and administration of programs,
- Unified Sports Adaptive PE Curriculum, written to satisfy Arizona State Standards
- Resource for transition of students from school to community sports and volunteer/service programs,
- Formal recognition of collaboration between Special Olympics Arizona and the school.

ARIZONA INTERSCHOLASTIC ASSOCIATION (AIA) PROVIDES:

- Leadership and representation at the national level,
- Special programs and awards (Scholar-Athlete/Activity, Excellence Awards, Outstanding Girls Athletic Program, Directors Cup Award, AIA Champions Awards Program),
- Bylaws interpretations,
- Source of rules books, score books, case books, and other publications,
- Adjudication and resolution of issues and concerns,
- Officials-related services, including training, assignment, and payment via RefPay
- Student Excess Catastrophic Accident Insurance,
- Calendar of Sanctioned Events/Information Calendar,
- Promotion of sportsmanship and a cooperative spirit among member schools, coaches, and athletes,
- Seminars, in-service training, and workshops,
- Dissemination of informational materials to member schools,
- Extensive website content regarding AIA Unified Sports on www.aiaonline.org and www.AZPreps365.org
- In-servicing schools to implement sportsmanship and coaches education programs.

SCHOOL PROVIDES:

- Completed annual Program Application,
- Assistance with long term planning for the program within the school,
- Personnel and students to develop and implement programs,
- Assistance with annual evaluation of programs,
- Sports equipment, facilities, transportation to competitions,
- Formal recognition of collaboration between the school and Special Olympics Arizona.