

AIA UNIFIED TRACK AND FIELD 2026-27 SEASON FACT SHEET



An AIA-sanctioned sport, which combines students with intellectual disabilities (Unified Athletes) and students without intellectual disabilities (Unified Partners) as high school athletes, teammates, and training partners.

To guarantee **meaningful involvement** and a memorable experience for all participants, the following **modifications** are in place under this model –

- Participants with intellectual disabilities (Unified Athletes) and without intellectual disabilities (Unified Partners) compete against each other in co-ed heats/flights within each Unified event.
- To provide a competitive and level playing field where all participants have the opportunity to succeed, seeding for all heat/flights will be determined by similar qualifying times or distances.
- To emphasize inclusion and teamwork, awards will be given for team accomplishments only.
- Team rosters shall be a minimum of 8 participants and no more than 25 participants with an approximately 50/50 ratio of Unified Athletes to Unified Partners.
 - For rosters exceeding 24 participants, please contact **Thomas@SpecialOlympicsArizona.org** to learn more about the A/B sub-team option to include all of your participants.



EVENTS OFFERED

- ♦ 100 Meters ♦ 400 Meters ♦ 2x200 Meter Relay
- ♦ 4x100 Meter Relay ♦ Shot Put ♦ Turbo Javelin ♦ Long Jump

2026-27 SEASON

- Special Olympics Arizona's "8-practice" rule is in effect for participation in AIA Unified Sports. Practices must be at least one hour to qualify as a sanctioned practice, and all eight hours of practice must be completed prior to the team's first competition.
- **In order to qualify for advancement to the AIA Unified Track and Field State Championship, teams must compete at a qualifying Unified Track and Field Sectionals meet.**
- **The top 15 top athlete/partner pairs statewide will qualify for the AIA State Championship.** Teams who place first at a qualifying Unified Sectionals meet are guaranteed advancement to the state championship. The remaining spots will be based on final team scores from the Unified Sectionals meets.

2027 HIGH SCHOOL UNIFIED TRACK AND FIELD SECTIONALS

- Qualifying Section Meets are scheduled as follows:
 - **April 19, 2027**
 - **April 20, 2027**
 - (Yuma) TBD

2027 AIA STATE TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP

- The 2024 AIA State Championship is scheduled as follows:
 - **Thursday, April 29th, 2027**
 - **Westwood High School**
 - **Tournament Entry DEADLINE – Wednesday, May 8th @ 5:00PM**

GOVERNANCE AND RULES

For more information on specific rules and regulations, check the **High School Unified Team Track and Field Sports and Competition Rules** and the **2023 State Unified Track and Field Tournament Guide** located on the AIA's website at <http://aiaonline.org/sports/unified>.



AIA UNIFIED SPORTS

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND CLEARANCE



UNIFIED SPORTS TEAM ROLES

- Unified Athlete – an enrolled student with an intellectual/developmental disability
- Unified Partner – an enrolled student without an intellectual/developmental disability

UNIFIED ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

- Any enrolled student *with an intellectual disability* who meets both the Unified Athlete eligibility statement below and all requirements of the AIA and school district's athletic clearance policy is eligible to participate as a Unified Athlete in AIA Unified Sports.
- An individual is considered to have intellectual disabilities for purposes of determining his or her eligibility to participate in Unified Sports® if that individual:
 - Has been identified by an agency or professional as having intellectual disabilities as determined by their localities; or
 - Has been identified by the school as receiving special education and related services consistent with an individual education program based on a cognitive, developmental and/or intellectual disability.

UNIFIED PARTNER ELIGIBILITY

- Any enrolled student who meets all requirements of the AIA and school district's athletic clearance policy is eligible to participate as a Unified Partner in AIA Unified Sports.
- Any student competing in an individual sport (i.e. Swim, Track & Field) **IS** eligible to participate as a Unified Partner in the same sport, **EXCEPT** during the following circumstances –
 - Any competition at which the student is attempting to qualify for advancement to a state-level competition in any non-Unified event.
 - Any state-level competition at which the student is competing in any non-Unified events.
- Any student competing in a team sport (i.e. Soccer and Basketball) at the **varsity level** is **NOT** eligible to compete as a Unified Partner in the **same sport**.
 - Example – A varsity soccer player is **NOT** eligible to compete on the Unified Soccer team
 - Example – A varsity soccer player **IS** eligible to compete on a Unified Basketball team.

AIA STUDENT ATHLETIC CLEARANCE POLICY

- All participants in interscholastic activities must be in compliance with all student eligibility rules. The student eligibility rules are enumerated and presented in detail in Article 15 of the AIA Bylaws.
- **Physical Examination Rule (Article 15.7)** states a student shall not be allowed to practice or compete in interscholastic athletics until there is a record of a preparticipation physical examination on file with the school. The preparticipation physical examination forms provided by the AIA include three parts:
 1. Annual Preparticipation Physical EVALUATION – (Form 15.7-A)
 2. Annual Preparticipation Physical EXAMINATION – (Form 15.7-B)
 3. Annual Preparticipation Acknowledgement – (Form 15.7-C).
 4. Annual Preparticipation Consent to Treat Form – (Form 15.7-D)
 5. Unified Sports Participant Release—(Form 15.7-E)
- **Parental or Legal Guardian Consent Rule (Article 15.8)** states that parental or legal guardian consent is required before a student can be eligible to practice or compete in interscholastic competition. All students shall have appropriate permission in which the parent or legal guardian authorized participation on file with the school.

SCHOOL/DISTRICT ATHLETIC CLEARANCE POLICY

- Unified Athletes and Unified Partners are to be treated and recognized as AIA high school athletes, and will be expected to adhere to any and all district/school policies and procedures regarding student athletic participation and clearance.
- If a district has a "Pay to Play" policy, it is the district's choice to charge a participation fee for AIA Unified Sports.
- Unified Athletes and Unified Partners are subjected to a grade check as defined by their district/ and/or school's athletic academic eligibility policy.