

Level 2 Flag Football

The Level 2 Flag Football training is designed for Special Olympics Minnesota coaches who would like to become a Level 2 Flag Football coach and/or for volunteers who would like information about Special Olympics Minnesota Flag Football . This training counts as Level 2 certification and/or recertification for three years from the date this training is completed.

This training will cover Special Olympics Minnesota's Flag Football events, rules, competitions, the divisioning process, registration and Flag Football resources.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Coaching Special Olympics Athletes

Coaching Special Olympics Athletes prepares Special Olympics coaches to use their sport-specific knowledge in coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities. This course meets the Special Olympics standards and competencies for coach certification. For veteran Special Olympics coaches, this course serves as a reminder of the essentials sometimes forgotten after years of coaching. For new Special Olympics coaches, this course will help prepare you for your first role in coaching Special Olympics athletes.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Coaching Special Olympics Athletes

*The better the coach ...
the better the experiences ...
the better the athlete!*



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Course Overview

This course will cover specific topics related to:

1 - The Athlete

3 - Preparing for & Coaching During Competition



2 - Teaching & Training

4 - Managing the Program



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - The Athlete

Important Considerations concerning Special Olympics Athletes

Psychological Issues
(*Learning*)

Medical
Issues



Social
Issues

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - Psychological Considerations

Motivation – helping athletes maintain interest

- May have shorter attention span; harder to keep independently “on task”.
- May be motivated more by short-term rather than long-term goals.
- May learn better with more frequent positive reinforcement.

Perception – helping athletes understand the sport in which they are participating

- May have impairments in sight or hearing.
- May have difficulty focusing attention on the appropriate object or task.



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - Psychological Considerations

Comprehension – helping athletes remember and perform the skill they have learned
(*Understanding*)

- May find it difficult to understand purely verbal explanations of new skills. Often find it easier to learn through visual demonstrations and physical prompts.
- May have difficulty in understanding complex, multi-part actions or explanations.
- Often take a longer time between learning one piece of information and the next (learning plateau)
- Less able to generalize skills learned in one situation to a different situation.

Memory

- May need frequent repetition and reminders in order to remember a concept or skill



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - Psychological Challenges

Each psychological item has it's challenge and action:

Psychological Item	Challenge	Action
Perception	Easily distracted by noise	Control surroundings
Motivation	History of neglect & negative reinforcement, feeling of failure	Focus on positive, appropriate reinforcement, catch the athlete doing well
Memory	Difficulty applying skills in different environments	Practice in different settings
Comprehension	Difficulty learning through verbal explanation only	Add demonstrations and/or physical manipulation

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - Medical Considerations

Down Syndrome

- Approximately 10% of individuals with Down Syndrome have a condition called atlanto-axial instability, which is a mal-alignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition may cause possible injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.
- Prohibited sports – equestrian, gymnastics, diving, pentathlon, butterfly and dive starts in aquatics, high jump, alpine/snowboarding, squat lift and soccer.

Medications

- Understand the physical side effects of an athlete's medication
- Very important to know the medications athletes are taking



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - Medical Considerations

Seizures

- Incidence tends to be higher with Special Olympics athletes
- Athlete safety to minimize the adverse effects of a seizure



Physical Disabilities

- Some athletes also have physical disabilities which may affect the sports they can participate in or the methods of teaching a coach must use. Special Olympics has events for individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers or other assistance.
- Muscle strength may be needed for particular sports and some athletes may not have the strength for those sports. This is often due to lack of use rather than a permanent disability.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - Medical Considerations

Autism

- 20% of athletes exhibit one or more of the autism spectrum disorders
- Over arousal



Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

- These athletes consistently function better on performance tasks compared with verbal tasks. The more concrete the task, the better the performance.
- Tend to have poor verbal comprehension skills, despite being comfortable and chatty around people. These athletes will also tend to have attention and memory deficits and often display poor judgment in distinguishing right from wrong.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 – Medical Consideration for each Action

Action	See the challenge that correlates with the appropriate action.
1 Down Syndrome	Ensure the athlete is screened for atlanto-axial instability
2 Seizures	Be prepared to protect the athlete and minimize adverse affects
3 Autism spectrum disorders	Control and/or block self-stimulatory behavior and set up a behavior support plan
4 Attention deficit/hyperactivity	Shorten drills and provide one-to-one assistance when needed
5 Fetal alcohol syndrome	Provide concrete performance tasks

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - Social Considerations

Social Skills

- May lack basic social/adaptive skills due to a lack of opportunity or training
- Lacking communication and positive interaction with others

Recreation at Home

- Lack of physical activity
- Lack of encouragement

Economic Status

- May lack financial means
- May not have access to independent transportation



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 1 - Social considerations

All of the following social consideration(s) may impact an athlete's participation in Special Olympics:

- Inappropriate responses to social situations
- Physical inactivity being modeled
- Lack of endurance
- Lack of access to transportation

Our challenge as coaches is to develop a full understanding of our athletes and the strengths and weaknesses they bring with them to a Special Olympics program. By doing so we can begin to develop a training and competition program that they will benefit from and enjoy.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 2 – Teaching & Training the Athlete



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 2 - Teaching & Training the Athlete

There are many ways to organize a training session for Special Olympics athletes. Because of some of the things previously identified concerning comprehension and memory, there is considerable value in developing a consistent training routine that provides familiarity, stability, and comfort.

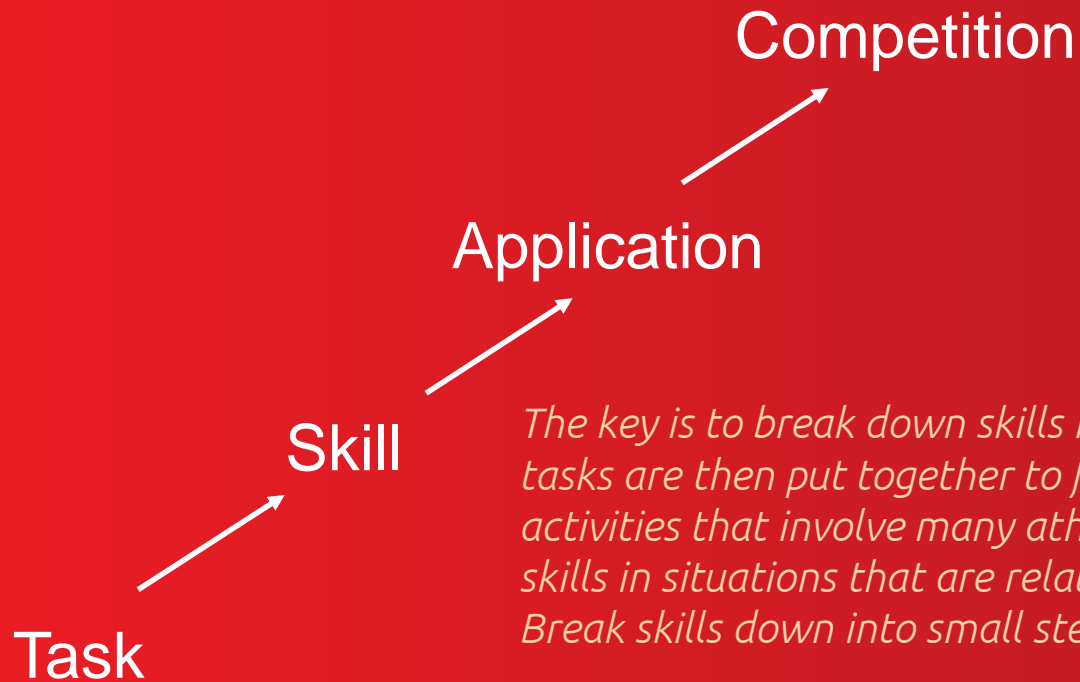


Unit 2 - Organizing a Training Session

Component and Details	Layout of Drill or Activity
Warm-Up & Stretching	Specific to the sport, repetitive and involve athletes in leading activity
Skills Instruction	Break skills into smaller tasks, involve many athletes at a time and practice skills related to event situations
Competition Experience	Scrimmage, simulate event/game situations and work towards what the competition will look like
Cool-Down, Stretch, & Reward	Playing a game related to that sport and ending each training with a cool down activity and stretch



Unit 2 - Training Sequence



The key is to break down skills into small tasks or steps; tasks are then put together to form skills. Use drills and activities that involve many athletes at all times. Practice skills in situations that are related to the game or event. Break skills down into small steps.



Unit 2 - Training Sequence

What's the challenge and how to fix it?

Training Sequence Element	Challenge	Action
Application	Acquire ability to repeatedly demonstrate sport competencies in different situations & environments	Provide gamelike drills or situations
Skills	Acquire ability to perform series of sport competencies effectively and necessary to perform a sport	Work on essential sport competencies to perform the sport
Competition	Acquire ability to put essential sport competencies into practice	Provide scrimmage opportunities in practice
Tasks	Acquire ability to perform essential sport competencies	Break essential sport competencies down into individual parts

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 2 - Communication

Communication is key to immediately reinforcing desired behavior; there are several key words that begin with a "C", which address what a coach should say.

- Clear
- Concrete
- Concise
- Consistent
- Command-oriented



Special Olympics
Minnesota



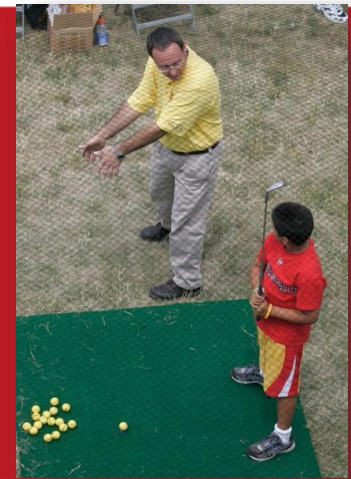
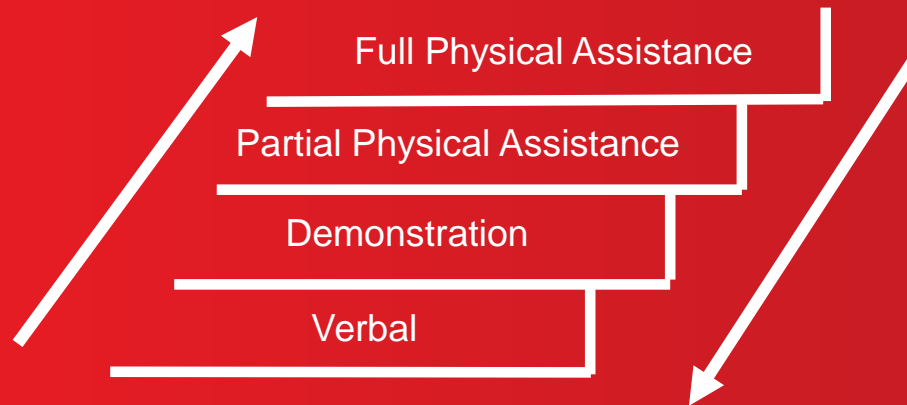
Unit 2 - Communication

Communication Criteria	Description	Sport Example
Concise	Use a few key words that cue a desired action	"Go to the free throw line" Showing an athlete where to stand on defense
Consistent	Use the same word or phrase for the same action	Coach constantly say "Breathe" – teaching an athlete when to take a breath in aquatics
Clear	Use easy to understand words that have one meaning	"Swing the bat" teaching how/when to swing.
Command-Oriented	Use words that elicit or reinforce a desired action	"On your mark. Set. Go." Using this phrase for starts in athletics.
Concrete	Connect words to something defined or tangible	"Jump forward" when coaching an athlete in the long jump.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 2 - Levels of Assistance



Each athlete needs to be met where he or she is and with what each individual is ready to do. It is important to use the appropriate level of instruction and assistance.

- The lower the ability athlete, the more assistance may be required
- Verbal should always be accompanied by demonstration
- Partial physical assistance may be needed to help the athlete get positioned properly
- When all else fails, take the athlete through the complete motion



Unit 2 - Level of Instruction or Assistance

Level of Instruction or Assistance	Description	Sport Example
Full Physical Assistance	Help the athlete through the entire motion of the skill	Volleyball: coach makes an adjustment to the athlete's arm swing by moving the athlete's arm through the entire spiking movement
Verbal	Tell the athlete what to do	Footwork: "run forward to the line; then return, running backward"
Demonstration	Show the athlete the proper technique	Soccer: one athlete shoots on goal while another watches
Partial Physical Assistance	Place the athlete's hands in the proper position	Golf: coach physically adjusts the athlete's hands on the golf club with the correct grip

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 2 - Managing Athlete Behavior

The goal is for coaches to meet each athlete where he/she is and treat him/her accordingly. However, a coach may often have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic ... not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior, the inappropriate behavior may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating in the moment.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 2 - Managing Athlete Behavior

Athlete Behavior Characteristics	Strategies to Improve Learning
Swimmer has a short attention span	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Dwell on a stroke or activity for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task2. Provide different opportunities for repetition and review, which is the key to gaining new skill.3. Work one-on-one to gain full attention.
Basketball athlete yells if he/she misses a shot	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Emphasize the other aspects of the game besides shooting2. Work on shooting drills without a hoop3. Begin to shoot at a hoop but in a non-game setting with a one-on-one coach
Bowler doesn't wait their turn	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have a coach at the lane help with the order of bowlers, explain whose turn it is2. Have the bowler wait with a coach behind the bowling area until their turn is up3. Emphasize the order and that the bowler will always follow the same individual



Unit 3 - Preparing & Coaching for Competition

- A key goal of Special Olympics is to provide an opportunity for all athletes to experience success in competitions.
- A Special Olympics athlete can benefit from many aspects of a competition (including meeting new people, participating in the festivities of Opening Ceremonies and other social events, the excitement of traveling to new places and staying away from home, etc.). None of these things, however, should be as important to the coach as the focus on the participation in the competition itself.

This section highlights ways to improve the quality of an athlete's competition experience.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

Registration

- Provide accurate entry and team roster information, qualifying times, and skills assessment scores.
- Help the Competition Committee prepare a successful competition for your athletes by meeting their registration deadlines.

Official competition rules

- A good Competition Committee will instruct its officials/referees to enforce the Official Special Olympics Rules. Make sure you know them.
- Teach your athletes the rules and, during training, phase out your verbal reminders about rules. At competition, coaches may have little or no opportunity to assist athletes when they are not following the rules.
(A coach cannot be on the track with them!)



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

Supervision

- Discuss the challenges associated with participating in competition away from home, and why adequate, non-coaching support personnel are needed.
 - Transportation
 - Lodging (need for same-sex supervision)
 - Social activities
 - Coaches meetings (who will supervise athletes during these?)
 - Multiple events to supervise, awards ceremonies, etc.
- Design a supervision worksheet with the essential elements covered.



Unit 3 - Preparing for Competition

Travel and overnight

- Discuss overnight concerns with parents or group-home supervisors.
- Write up a simple checklist of items to bring and distribute to athletes and parents
- Make sure that all special medication needs are understood. Coaches may have to assist with handling medications. Have all medical forms and information readily available at all times.
- Work out the most effective rooming arrangements, taking into account athlete choice, behavioral and personality clashes, etc.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

Guidelines for success:

Teach responsibility & independence

- Assist athletes in dressing appropriately, understanding what is happening at the competition site, maintaining a focused attitude and appropriate behavior.

Arrive early

- Allow time for putting on uniforms, warm-up and stretching routine and focusing on the competition.

Encourage maximum effort in divisioning & competition

- Applying the “honest-effort” rule from the Special Olympics Rule book

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

Guidelines for success:

Let athletes compete without direct supervision

- Not running down the side of the track shouting instructions, allowing the competition officials to conduct the competition and allowing athletes to make mistakes and helping them learn from their mistakes.

Make any official protests calmly

- If you think there is a valid reason to protest the outcome, do so in a calm manner, following the competition guidelines and not involving athletes in disputes with officials.

Help athletes learn from winning & losing

- Deal graciously and realistically with winning and losing. Focus on effort made, recognize accomplishments and new skills that were performed and taking something positive away from the experience.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 3 - Competition-Day Coaching

The coach can be the key person who makes any competition experience a good one.

Taking time to adequately prepare for competition and plan for on-site supervision and that coaching is time well spent.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 4 – Managing the Program

The successful Special Olympics coach:

Is sports and coaching knowledgeable

- Special Olympics is a sport organization
- Technical knowledge of the sport and how to teach it is essential if coaches are to effectively help athletes improve their sport skills and truly benefit from Special Olympics.
- Successful coaches are constantly looking for opportunities to learn more about the sport.

Is Special Olympics knowledgeable

- Special Olympics has a clearly defined mission, philosophy, and rules that have been developed through years of worldwide experience with athletes with intellectual disabilities.
- A better understanding of these will benefit your athletes.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 4 – Managing the Program

The successful Special Olympics coach:

Recruits and trains assistant coaches

- Individualized coach-athlete teaching is key to successful training in Special Olympics.
- Assistant coaches can be recruited to help provide individualized attention.
- Assistant coaches are useful only if they are trained and coordinated at practice.

Recruits and trains athletes

- A coach is also a promoter and recruiter; always tries to expand participation

Assists with appropriate sport selection

- Age appropriate, is the athlete able to participate safely and successfully and does the athlete have a choice of participating in a different sport or event.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 4 – The Successful Special Olympics Coach:

Offers activities for all abilities

- In order to accommodate a range of abilities

Puts a priority on safety

- This is the coach's number one priority

Conducts high-quality training and competition

- Appropriate training, activities such as training days or camps, helps develop pride in being an athlete and organizes competition opportunities if none exist

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 4 – The Successful Special Olympics Coach:

Involves families

- Educates families and group-home providers about the benefits of Special Olympics, appropriate nutrition and food choices and training at home.

Assists with community inclusion

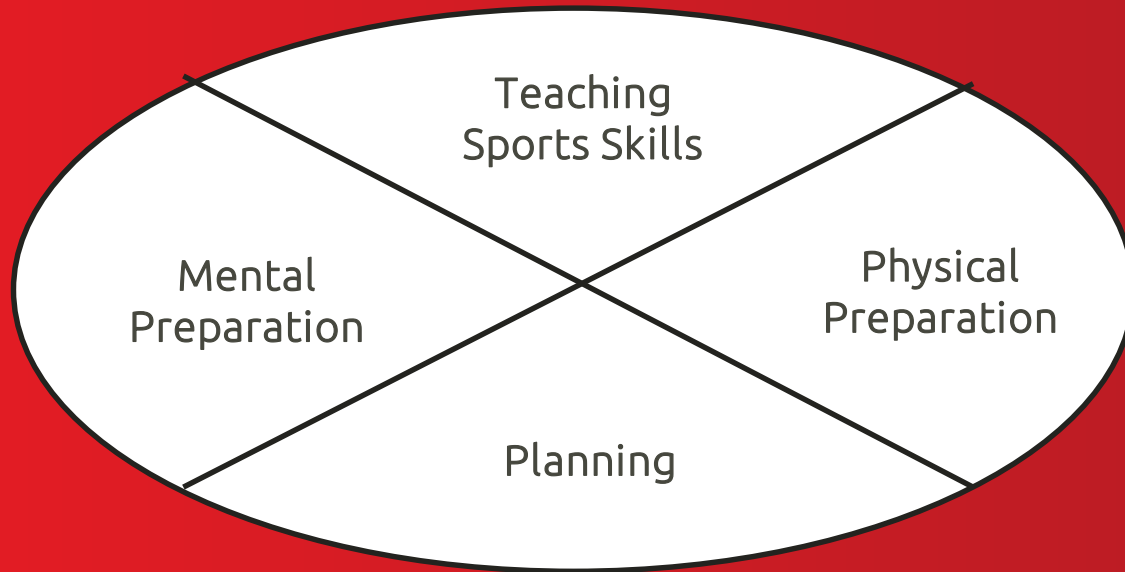
- Improves social and communication skills, opportunities to talk about Special Olympics at civic functions and assistance in joining non-Special Olympics sports opportunities

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 4 – Area of Focus

Athlete Safety



Coaching Philosophy

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unit 4 – Preparation

Assessment



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Improved Performance & Well-Being

- TRAINING → the key
- COMPETITION → the means
- OUTCOMES → skill, confidence, courage, & joy
- GOAL → better preparation for life
- RESULTS → lifelong skills, acceptance & increased independence



Let's Get After It and Get It Done!

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Level 2 Flag Football

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Level 2 Flag Football

Coach ratio per team:

Athletes	Level II	Level I
3-4	1	0
5-8	1	1
9-12	1	2
13-16	1	3

Roster size: (traditional and Unified)

6-16 athletes

All Coaches and Unified Partners must complete the Level 1 certification prior to their participation with a team. Level 1 certification requires a Volunteer Application and Level 1 online training and both items are found [here](#).

Special Olympics
Minnesota



SOMN Flag Football Events

Individual Skills - athletes compete in skill stations in Run and Catch, Throwing for Accuracy, Throwing for Distance, Agility and Speed: Hand-off, and Flag Pulling.

Unified Flag Football - 5 vs 5 (3 athletes/2 Unified partners on the field at all times) individuals with and without intellectual disabilities compete on the same team (6-16 athletes/Unified partners - minimum of 3 Unified Partners on roster)

Areas 3, 7-13 offer Unified Flag Football competitions. To contact the Program Manager for information about your Area competition please see the map and contact list below.

Areas 1, 2, 3 – Dani Druse dani.druse@somn.org | 763.270.7193

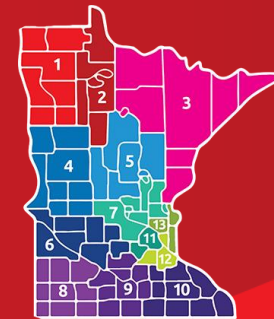
Areas 4-6, 8 - Leah Wolkow leah.wolkow@somn.org | 763.270.7195

Areas 7,13 - Emily Garness emily.garness@somn.org | 763.270.7179

Areas 9,10 – Zak Armstrong zak.armstrong@somn.org | 763.270.7173

Area 11– Jake Krier jake.krier@somn.org | 763.270.7178

Area 12 - Sarah Richardson sarah.richardson@somn.org | 763.270.7175



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Individual Skills and Unified Skills

Individual skills and Unified skills will be offered at area and state competitions. Athletes compete in each skill station and are scored based on completing all stations.

Individual skills is designed for athletes to compete in flag football without competing on a Unified Flag Football 5 vs 5 team. Athletes compete in five skill stations and receive a score based on how well they complete each skill station.

Individual skills events offered at:

Area competition - offered at all area competitions

State competition - if an athlete wants to attend state they must compete at area first

Individual skills athletes may not compete on a Unified Flag Football team in the same season because schedules may conflict.

Skill Stations

Athletes that compete in Individual skills must participate in Individual skills at practice and record their score during online registration.

To see individual skill station diagrams and scoring please click [here](#).

Individual Skills stations:

Run and Catch

Throwing for Accuracy

Throwing for Distance

Agility and Speed: Hand-off

Flag Pulling



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unified Flag Football Rules

Playing Field and Equipment

- **Field** – 40 yards x 25 yards (10 yard endzone, 40 yard field and out of bounds at the 45 yard line)
- **Equipment** – mouth guards required, no other pads
- **Shoes** – no metal or hard spikes allowed. Athletic shoes or plastic spikes.
- **Flags** – a one-piece, three-flag belt is used for competition (example belt [here](#), provided at competition)
- **Ball Size** – intermediate, size 4 (example football [here](#))

Unified Positions (Unified Partners must wear wrist bands to note who is a Unified partner on the field)

- **Roster** - Three athletes and two Unified Partners must be on the field at all times.
- **Positions** – Unified Partners may play any position on offense or defense.
- **Throwing** – A Unified Partner cannot pass to another Unified Partner. *If ball is tipped by an athlete first then a Unified Partner can catch the ball.*
- **Rushing** – There is no restriction on who can receive a hand-off.



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unified Flag Football Rules

Roster Size – 6 minimum, 16 maximum

Game Play – 5 vs. 5 (3 athletes, 2 partners on the field at all times). Teams must register at least 3 unified players.

Game Length – two, 18 minute running time halves (may adjust time at competition). Stop time the last two minutes of each half. Clock in second half remains running time if a team is ahead by 21 points. During stop time the clock stops on all dead balls and clock resumes at snap.

Timeouts – 1 per half, 1 in OT (no carry over). 1 minute max.

Possession Clock – 40 seconds in between downs

Touchdown – 6 points

Extra Point - 5 yard line = 1 point, 10 yard line = 2 points (teams choose)

Safety – 2 points

Penalties – All penalties are 10 yards

Unified Partner Assistance- teams are not allowed to have an additional “non-playing” partner on the field to assist an athlete. This will be penalize as too many players on the field.



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Unified Flag Football Rules

First Possession – A coin flip determines first possession and teams chooses to receive the ball in the first half or second

Overtime – A coin flip determines first possession, winner choses to go first or second.

Each team receives two plays starting from the 35 yard line. The team gaining the most yards wins.

If same yardage is gained or a touchdown is scored by both teams then each team receives one play from the 35 yard line.

If OT remains tied after both scenarios then teams continue with one play from the 35 yard line until the tie is broken.

Overtime Additional Rules

Fumble and/or Interception in OT results in loss of play not possession.

If a team scores a TD on the first play they still receive a second play.

If a team is safetied on the first play of OT they start their second play from the goal line.

Defense is not awarded any points on a safety.



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Offensive Rules

Offense Possessions – All possessions, except interceptions, start from the 35 yard line. Interceptions start from spot of interception (reverse field).

Downs – Four downs to pass mid-field, if a team reaches mid-field they will have four downs to reach the end zone.

Start of Play – The ball has to be snapped by an offensive player on the line of scrimmage. No minimum number of players required on the line of scrimmage during the snap. The center can snap either between the legs or sideways; the center's legs may straddle the line of scrimmage when snapping the ball.

Dead Ball Snap - if the ball is snapped and not caught then the play is dead and it is a loss of down. Next possession starts from the spot the ball was snapped.

QB Running – QB cannot run with the ball across the line of scrimmage when being rushed

No Handoff Zone – A player cannot rush the ball 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the end zone.

Flea Flicker - are allowed. Has to be an overhead, backwards, behind the line of scrimmage pass or handoff. Pass still cannot be Unified Partner to Unified Partner. QB is eligible as wide receiver.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Offensive Rules (cont.)

No Pitches or Laterals – hand-offs only and no pitches during course of play. Sidearm shovel pass behind the line of scrimmage OK.

Blocking – Only screen blocks allowed, hands must be kept on the side of the body.

Additional Blocking and Down-field Blocking Rules

- The screen blocker must give an opponent at least one step if opponent has his/her back to blocker.
- The screen blocker must not initiate contact with opponent.
- The screen blocker may not take a position so close to a moving opponent that this opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing directions.
- After a screen blocker has taken his/her legal screening position, the blocker may move laterally or backward to maintain the block.

Flag Guarding – No diving, spinning, shielding, or blocking the flag from the defense.

Flag Falls Off - play stops whenever the player with the ball has their flag off. This includes if the flag falls off without being pulled.

Intentional Kneel Down - intentionally kneeling the ball is allowed. Play is called dead but clock continues to run.

Player Falls Down - player will be called down once their knee or elbow touches the ground.

A defensive player does NOT need to pull their flag once down to solidify the end of play.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Defensive Rules

Rushing the QB – All players who rush the QB must be a minimum of 7-yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped (a flat cone is placed 7-yards from the line of scrimmage).

- Players not rushing the QB may defend the line of scrimmage.
- Once the QB hands off the ball, the 7-yard zone no longer exists and all defenders are eligible to rush.

Rushing a hand-off – Once the hand-off takes place anyone can cross the line of scrimmage; the 7-yard zone no longer exists, and all defenders are eligible to rush.

Possession Change – If a team is stopped on downs then the new offensive team will start from the 35 yard line.

Interceptions – Cannot be returned, teams start from spot of INT (reverse field).

Fumbles – No fumbles, if the ball is fumbled the play is a ruled dead and returned to the offensive team (unless 4th down then the ball is given to the defense on the 35 yard line).

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Penalties

Declining Penalties

All offensive penalties are automatically accepted. Defensive penalties have the option to be declined.

Redzone Penalties

No penalty may take the ball more than half the distance to the offender's goal line.



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Offensive Penalties

Offense Penalties

Ten yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.

Sportsmanship/Roughing – at official's discretion (aka 'unsportsmanlike conduct')

Illegal Motion - more than one player moving at the snap and/or moving forward at snap

Offside - in neutral zone at snap, false start

Illegal forward pass - Partner to Partner

Illegal rushing play - inside No Handoff Zone or pitch/lateral

Pass Interference - pushing or "picking" a defender

Illegal Contact - holding, blocking, bumping, bull-rushing – running through someone

Flag Guarding - diving, continuous spinning, warding off

Delay of Game - failing to snap within 40 seconds of ready

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Defensive Penalties

Defense Penalties

Ten yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down

Offside - in or beyond neutral zone at snap

Pass Interference - pushing or “picking” a receiver

Illegal Contact - holding, blocking, bumping, bull-rushing – running through someone

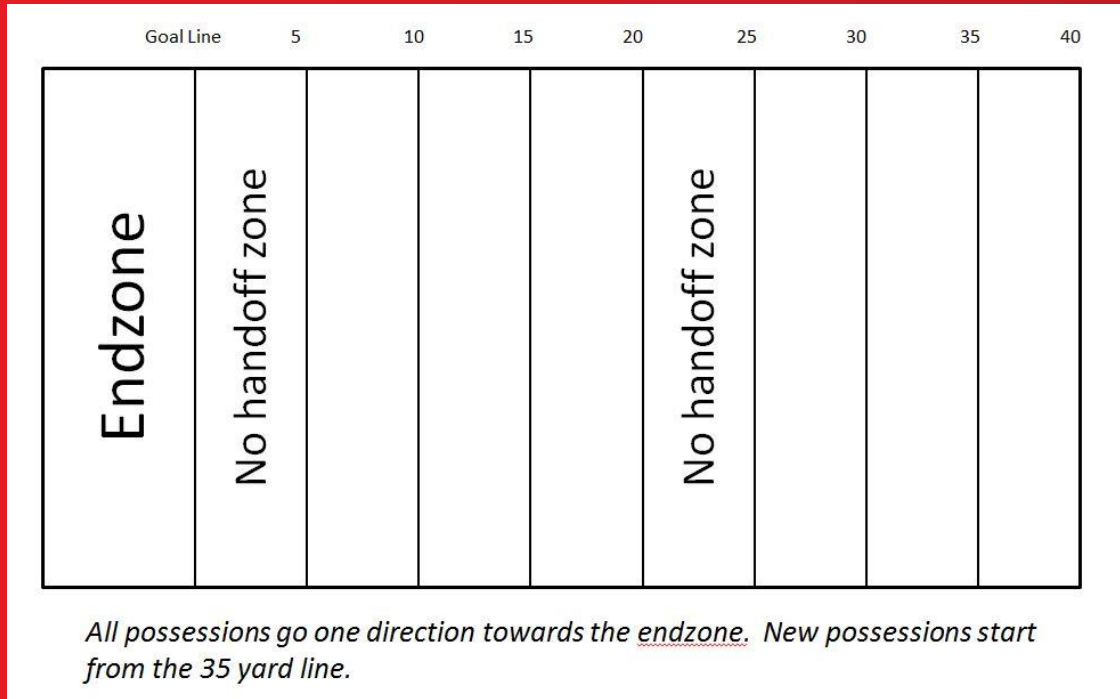
Illegal Flag Pull - before receiver has the ball. A receiver is eligible to catch the ball if their flag is pulled before they catch the ball. If the ball is caught they may choose the yard they caught the ball at or the 10 yard penalty.

Illegal Rushing of Quarterback - violating the 7 yard rush rule

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Field Layout



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Football Glossary

Delay of the Game: the ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or lack of action by either team that tends to prevent this is considered a delay of the game. This includes:

- Interrupting the 40-second count for any reason except for a granted time-out.
- Consuming more than 40 seconds to snap the ball after it is ready for play.
- Failing to remove an injured player for whose benefit an excess time-out has been granted.
- Deliberately advancing the ball after it has been declared dead.

Diving: a defensive or offensive player may dive to catch a pass, however, diving is illegal when used to down a player or advance a ball. A player cannot dive in an attempt to gain extra yardage. The team will be penalized accordingly.

Eligible Receiver: (at state) all offensive players are eligible to receive a pass (green color model), except in Unified Sports divisions where Unified Partners are ineligible when Unified Partners are throwing the pass (yellow and red color model). Unified Sports teams are expected to comply with this rule without intervention by officials. Failure to "self- patrol" will be considered unsportsmanlike, and will be penalized accordingly.

False Start: no member of the offensive team may simulate the start of the play before the ball is snapped.

Handing the Ball: handing the ball is transferring player possession from one teammate to another without throwing or kicking it. A ball carrier may hand the ball backward at any time. No forward hand-offs are allowed (Illegal pass).



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Football Glossary (cont.)

Hurdling: jumping over or attempting to jump over a player, by the ball carrier, to prevent from being downed or to gain additional yardage is illegal. (Note: Jumping over a player who is on the ground to avoid injury, by official's judgment, is legal.)

Inadvertent Whistle: in case of an inadvertent whistle the team in possession of the ball may choose to accept the result of the play at the point where the play was blown dead or choose to re- play the down.

Line of Scrimmage: the line of scrimmage for each team is a vertical plane through the point of the ball nearest the team's goal line. Each player on a team must be on its side of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

Motion: only one player of the offensive team may be in motion at the snap. This player must be behind the quarterback and not moving toward its goal line at the time the ball is snapped. If the player comes to a stop he/she must be set for one second.

Screen Blocking: legally obstructing an opponent without contacting him/her with any part of the screen blocker's body. The screen blocker shall have his/her arms fully extended to the ground (below the waist) either at his/her side, in front, or behind his/her back.

- Any use of arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during the screen block is illegal.
- A player must be on his/her feet before, during and after screen blocking. Screen blocking is the only form of legal blocking that can be used by any player at any time.
- The screen blocker must give an opponent at least one step if opponent has his/her back to blocker.
- The screen blocker must not initiate contact with opponent.
- The screen blocker may not take a position so close to a moving opponent that this opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing directions.
- After a screen blocker has taken his/her legal screening position, the blocker may move laterally or backward to maintain the block.
- Note: If any of the above provisions are violated, and contact results, the screener has committed an illegal block.*

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Football Glossary (cont.)

Shielding (Flag Guarding): runners shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for opponent to pull or remove their flag belt. This includes:

- Swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt
- Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt
- Lowering the shoulders or arm over the flag belt

Shift: a shift is the action of one or more offensive players who after taking set positions move to a new position prior to the snap. A player who shifts must reset for one second prior to the snap

Snap: a snap is the legal act of passing the ball through the legs from the ground to the quarterback to start a play.

Substitution: any player on the roster may enter upon the completion of a play (when the ball is dead). Each substitute must play in the game.

Dead ball- the play is marked dead (clock stopped during stop time) when:

- A player with the ball runs out of bounds
- A player is marked down, either by flag removal, taking a knee, falling, or flag falls off inadvertently.
- Incomplete pass
- Fumble

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Flag Football Divisioning

Divisioning is based on age, athlete skill assessment scores and team information from coaches. Each team is required to submit an assessment score for each athlete as well as a team information page.

Assessment Score - Skill assessment scores are based on a coach rankings in defense, rushing, throwing, game awareness and catching. Please click [here](#) for a blank copy of the assessment score sheet.

Team Information - Information is provided based on any recent scrimmages, changes in roster from previous years or whether or not a team is stronger or weaker than previous years. Please click [here](#) for a blank copy of the team information page

State Unified Flag Football Divisioning Committee

State Unified Flag Football - divisioning is based on assessment scores and the results from Area and previous State competitions. When divisioning for State much more emphasis is put on tournament results and common opponents, coach notes, previous game results, and competitions.

Committee - divisioning is done by SOMN staff, coach feedback, and a divisioning committee consisting of coaches from all Areas. The committee meets for one hour either in person or via conference call two weeks before the competition. If you or someone from your delegation is interested in being a part of the State flag football divisioning committee please contact Devin Kaasa at devin.kaasa@somn.org

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Flag Football State Divisioning

Green: no restriction

Unified partners and athletes both play at a high level. Teams picking the green category will be placed in the highest division, and must be approved by the state office when choosing this category. The quarterback can throw to anyone regardless of being a Unified partner or an athlete.

Yellow: competitive experience

Unified partner to Unified partner passes are illegal–Unified partner dominance will be monitored. The yellow category is for teams where skill levels can vary but teams are still looking to have a competitive experience. Unified partners generally are at a higher or similar skill level to athletes.

Red: player development

Unified partner to Unified partner passes are illegal–Unified partner dominance will be monitored. Unified partners are at a higher skill level and serve as mentors on the field for athletes. The red category is typically lower skill-levels or athletes/Unified partners who are still learning the game. This category is more for teams looking for the team experience and not as much winning and losing.

****Teams may be moved to make appropriate divisions****

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Flag Football Registration

Registration

Registration is done [online](#) by Heads of Delegation or Head Coaches. In order to register online the coach must have a username and password. If you need help with registration please contact your [Sports Program Manager](#).

When a coach registers a team they must submit the following:

1. Assessment score for each athlete/Unified partner (see above)
2. Coaches on each team
3. Athletes/Unified partners/Coaches must have appropriate paperwork submitted in order to register

If an athlete is attending the State tournament they must attend Area first.



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Team Sport Divisioning Philosophy

The divisioning process for team sports is much different, and much harder, than individual sports. Unlike most individual sports, team sports do not have concrete distances or times that can be used, although we do have teams submit assessment scores for individual players. Once a game starts, however, the information contained in the assessments often takes a back seat to the dynamics at play minute-by-minute, play-by-play on the court or field.

The challenge with divisioning team sports is that there are many factors that affect how a team performs on any given day — missing players, illness, penalties, behavior, coaching, who's hot and who's not, individual match ups, etc. With divisioning in team sports, much more emphasis is put on game results, common opponents, coach rankings and coach notes. There is not a perfect science to ensure that all divisions will have close games, which is why we have developed a process for team sports that includes divisioning committees. The divisioning committees allow for more coach involvement, better team evaluation and improved divisioning. We recognize there may be some games during a competition that are not competitive, but we hope that the team sports divisioning process creates the most equal divisions possible.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Area Competitions

Area	Date	Location	City	Register	Contact
Area 3	Sept. 30	Portage Park	Cohasset	Sept. 15	dani.druse@somn.org
Area 9/10	Oct. 7	Gustavus Adolphus College	St. Peter	Sept. 24	zak.armstrong@somn.org
Area 7/11	Sept 30	West St. Paul Sports Dome	St. Paul	Sept. 9	emily.garness@somn.org
Area 12/13	Sept 29	West St. Paul Sports Dome	St. Paul	Sept. 9	sarah.richardson@somn.org

Special Olympics
Minnesota



State Competition

Tournament	Date	Location	City	Contact
State Unified	Oct. 26-28	HealthEast Sports Center	Woodbury	devin.kaasa@somn.org

State Unified Flag Football Competition Details

- Quota due Sept. 28, Registration due Oct. 7
- Celebration Ceremonies will be held over lunch on Saturday
- Teams are guaranteed three games and awards on Sunday
- Individual skills and Unified skills is offered Saturday morning
- Game fees - \$15 for coaches, \$20 for athletes/partners
- Meals - Sat and Sun box lunches. Concession stand options available throughout the weekend.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Practice, Skill Development & Resources

For additional information on Unified Flag Football please visit the [Special Olympics Minnesota Flag Football Page](#)

[Special Olympics Minnesota Unified Flag Football Handbook and Rules](#)

For any questions regarding Special Olympics Minnesota Unified Flag Football please contact Jasmine Jones Competition & Training Associate jasmine.jones@somn.org



Special Olympics
Minnesota



Coach Recognition Item

Each coach that becomes Level 2 certified or recertified in a sport is able to order one coach item per calendar year. Information can be found [HERE](#).

Please note that if you have not completed a Level 2 training or recertification course, or you have already received an item for the year, you will not be shipped an item.

Special Olympics
Minnesota



Level 2 Flag Football Quiz

Level 2 certification is not processed until you have completed the Level 2 quiz.

To take the Level 2 Flag Football quiz please [click here](#).

Special Olympics
Minnesota

