



# COURSE Module 2

## *Basketball Guide*



*November 2008*

# Unified Sports® Course Module 2 – Basketball Guide

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### **Coaching Resources for Unified Sports® Course Module 2 Unified Basketball Training**

Building Successful Unified Sports® Programs DVD, Unified Sports® Handbook; Player Assessment Guidelines; Special Olympics Basketball Rules and Coaching Guides; Course Agenda; Evaluation Form; Certification Form

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# Unified Sports® Course Module 2 – Basketball

## Introduction

### 1. SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTH AMERICA (SONA) UNIFIED SPORTS® TRAINING RESOURCES

**1.1 Link to the Special Olympics North America Coach Education System:** *This Unified Sport-Specific Course Module is extremely important in relation to the Unified Sports® Course Module 1 because it takes one through a successful process of forming appropriate Unified Sports® teams. It also provides important information on team cohesion, solving challenging issues, etc. In addition, it is an approved course within the Special Olympics North America Coach Education System.*

The key to improving athlete performance and well being is based on the quality of sport training and experiences provided by the local Special Olympics coach. (Coach refers to an individual who assumes responsibility for athletes, actively trains athletes, and coaches them in competitions.) The SONA Coach Education System identifies basic standards and competencies necessary and essential for being a Special Olympics coach. Standardization of essential knowledge and coaching proficiency adds credibility and consistency to the entire SONA Coach Education System, worldwide. The SONA Coach Education System will assist Special Olympics Programs in designing and providing quality sports training for Special Olympics coaches. In addition, coaches will gain new and/or improved competencies and skills, which will provide better training opportunities for their athletes.

All Special Olympics coaches must take the General Orientation one time and Protective Behaviors as a foundation and beginning to the coach certification process. The first level of the SONA Coach Education System is the sport-specific Skills Course or the Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course depending on prior sport experience. However, if the coach has no prior experience in working with Special Olympics athletes, the Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course must include a one to one and one-half hour activity session in working with Special Olympics athletes. The coach who desires to be trained specific to Unified Sports® would begin with the Unified Sports® Course Module 1 (which may be part of the General Orientation) and then proceed with a sport specific training school and/or Principles of Coaching. The Unified sport-specific training has been designed to build coaching competency above this basic coach education system to better assist with the delivery of Unified Sports® programs.

- Special Olympics General Orientation and Protective Behaviors – *Foundation*  
*Both are prerequisites before any certification is approved and must be attended.*
- Protective Behaviors – must be taken once every 3 years
- Special Olympics Unified Sports® Training  
*This may be offered as an independent course or additional classroom material in General Orientation.*
- Special Olympics Skills Course–Module 1
- Specific Unified Sports® Course–Modules 1 & 2
- Special Olympics Principles of Coaching Course–Module 2
- Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Seminar–Module 2 for individuals who are sport qualified
- Special Olympics Tactics Course–Module 3
- Special Olympics Comprehensive Mentoring–Module 4
- American Sport Education Program (ASEP) online courses
- First-Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Course
- Officials Training; Rules Updates
- Special Olympics Protective Behavior
- Education Updates [New Training Techniques; Safety Issues; Inappropriate Techniques, etc.]
- National Governing Body Courses; other sports organizations’ coaching courses
- Positive Coaching Alliance Workshops
- Other Special Olympics North America approved coaching courses

*[SONA Coach Education System diagram on next page]*

## Coach Education System Training and Certification



To receive SONA coach certification, an individual will:

- Attend an approved course, training seminar, or mentoring program;
- Complete the prescribed exam, workbook, etc. as applicable;
- Complete a specified practicum of working with Special Olympics athletes; **AND**
- Be authorized by a Special Olympics Program representative verifying such experiences and coaching competencies.

Coaches must achieve the beginning certification level within three years upon entering Special Olympics to become a coach. They must also take the Principles of Coaching Course once within the first six years. (Program planning for implementation will begin in 2009 with implementation beginning in 2010.) Coaches can choose from many approved courses for certification, maintaining certification or continuing education. This includes Unified Sports® Course, Principles of Coaching Course, sport-specific Tactics Course, ASEP online courses, Mentoring, Rules Update, CPR Courses, Protective Behaviors, Positive Coaching Alliance Workshops, etc. In order to maintain and/or upgrade coach certification, a coach continues taking approved coaching education courses. Each coach upgrades knowledge at least once every three years.

### **1.2 Link to Unified Sports® Handbook**

*This section emphasizes the relationship between the Unified Sports® training and sport-specific application. Furthermore, key reference points are to be identified from the Unified Sports® Handbook and Unified Sports® Course Module 2 Basketball Guide.*

All Special Olympics Unified Sports® coaches should have completed the Special Olympics General Orientation and Protective Behaviors, the Unified Sports® Course – Modules 1 & 2, and have either completed 10 hours of practical experience with Special Olympics athletes or a sport-specific training school. The intent of the sport-specific Unified Sports® training is to help Special Olympics coaches with the unique nuances of Unified Sports® in respective sport settings. It is not a substitute for preliminary coach education, but an additional resource for coach development.

Coaches participating in the Sport-specific Unified Sports® Course – Module 2 should have access to the Unified Sports® Handbook, appropriate rules guides for the sport, and coaching guide for the sport.

## **2. BASIC ORGANIZATION OF UNIFIED BASKETBALL**

*This information is included in the Unified Sports® Handbook – but framed within the unique needs of each sport.*

### **2.1 Partner Eligibility** (See 1.3 of Unified Sports® Handbook.)

- Meaningful inclusion/participation is best served with partners of similar age and physical and social skills with athletes.
- People with disabilities should never be the sole participants.

### **2.2 Team Selection** (See 2.6 of Unified Sports® Handbook.)

- All teammates should possess the requisite skills of the sport and an understanding of teamwork.
- Teams work best when all team members have similar sport-specific skills. However, successful development of a Unified Sports® team is possible as long as each team member contributes in a meaningful way, regardless of their ability. For example, a player may not be a good shooter, but may be a great defensive player.
- All team members should be closely matched in age, especially for athletes under 21 years of age, because of the influence of strength, speed and height on risk management.
- In basketball, utilize Unified Sports® to reach athletes and peers not currently involved in Special Olympics.
- Use a targeted approach when recruiting teammates to match the local program's needs. For example, if athletes are older and higher skilled, local colleges would be a good resource of potential partners. Community youth sport programs or schools would more adequately serve the needs of younger athletes.

**2.3 Rules** (See 1.4 of Unified Sports® Handbook and Special Olympics Official Sports Rules; identify specific modified rules for the sport.)

- Regarding roster size, a proportionate number could mean 6 athletes and 4 partners, which would allow 2 substitutions for each group.
- During play, there can be no more than 3 athletes and 2 partners on the floor at any given time.
- A Unified basketball team must have an adult non-playing coach.

### 3. PREPARATION FOR ON-COURT AND ATHLETE SESSIONS TO FOLLOW

#### 3.1 Scope and Sequence of Training Activities

Clearly list the goals and activities that will occur in the practical application section of training prior to working with athletes.

- Learn and practice assessment tools.
- Learn and practice a model practice plan (warm-up, skills instruction, competition experience, and cool-down plus team talk).

#### 3.2 Coach Participation – Expectations and Responsibilities with Athletes

The upcoming practical session with athletes and partners will afford coaches the opportunity to practice assessing players' skills and team play, forming teams, and evaluating team composition.

- Each coach participant will have the opportunity to practice and demonstrate basic skills.
- Teach a simple offense and defense to identify player readiness (partners' and athletes' skills and game understanding).

### **Preparation for Unified Sports® Training and Competition**

### 4. ASSESSING PLAYERS AND FORMING TEAMS

#### 4.1 Introduction

**Unified Sports® is not for everyone.** Before any player is placed on a Unified Sports® team, it is critical to utilize a procedure for screening and conducting basic skills testing for all players. Obtaining these results ensure that athletes and partners are appropriate and reasonably well matched for the Unified Sports® program.

Special Olympics North America recommends that the following assessment tests and player evaluations be made **mandatory** for all prospective and current Unified Sports® team players.

#### 4.2 Assessing Players

Player assessment is made up of two components: objective sports-specific skills assessment tests and subjective game-play assessment.

While it might be said that it is performance in a game that is the only meaningful assessment criteria, use of additional objective skills tests help improve the assessment process in a number of ways:

- a) Objective tests are useful to verify subjective assessments.
- b) Objective tests provide a measurable indicator for Special Olympics athletes who wish to move from traditional Special Olympics to Unified Sports®.
- c) Objective tests also serve to provide data for pre-classifying teams for Unified Sports® competitions.

#### 4.3 Recommended Testing Procedure

**Step 1:** Form an Assessment Team which includes individuals who are experienced in or with Special Olympics and/or individuals who are specialists in the sport of basketball.

**Step 2:** Put all participants through the three Basketball Skills Assessment Tests (SATs). These tests can be found at the end of this section as well as on the Special Olympics website ([www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)) under *Basketball* in the section for the Sports Skills Assessment Tests (the rebounding test is not found on this site).

Carefully read and consistently follow the instructions for administering the Dribbling, Perimeter Shooting, and Rebounding skills assessment tests. Demonstrate to all of the participants how to perform the test, and allow everyone a practice opportunity before administering it. Instruct the participants to perform to the best of their abilities in order to acquire the most accurate measurements. Allow re-start if confused.

Observe the athletes as they go through the SATs so that you can determine their knowledge of the game, their sport-specific skills, and how they respond to coaching. Following completion of the test, indicate each participant's score on the score sheet included with these materials.

**Step 3:** *Composite scores:* After all of the athletes and partners have completed the three SATs, add the scores to obtain a total score for each individual.

**Step 4:** On a flip chart or large sheet of paper, write the names of all of the Special Olympics athletes and their corresponding individual composite skills scores on the top half. On the bottom half, write the names of all of the partners and their corresponding individual composite skills scores.

Rank the scores in the group of Special Olympics athletes, from highest to lowest, by placing the appropriate rank order number next to the individual. For example, athlete # 1 has a score of 60, athlete # 2 has a score of 56, athlete # 3 has a score of 48, etc. Do the same ranking for the group of partners.

**Step 5:** *Formation of Teams Based on Basketball Skills Assessment Test Scores*

Create evenly balanced *preliminary teams* by ranking each athlete and partner based on their skill and ability. Start with the best players (athletes and partners) and systematically position players from there. The Special Olympics athlete with the highest total score is placed on Team # 1, the athlete with the second highest score is placed on Team # 2 and so on. Use the exact same approach when ranking the partners, except start with the team that was last in the athlete round first, and go in inverse order. The sample chart below shows to placement procedure to follow when creating balanced, mixed ability teams. You can use this system for any number of teams.

	<u>Team 1</u>	<u>Team 2</u>	<u>Team 3</u>	<u>Team 4</u>
Athletes:	1 (highest score)	2	3	4
	8	7	6	5
	9	10	11	12
	16	15	14	13
	17	18	19	20
	24	23	22	21
Partners:	4	3	2	1 (highest score)
	5	6	7	8
	12	11	10	9
	13	14	15	16

Remember, in five-on-five full-court basketball, there must always be three Special Olympics athletes and two partners on the floor. In 3-on-3 half-court basketball, there must always be two Special Olympics athletes and one partner on the floor.

**Step 6:** *Play 10-15 minute assessment games.*

Using the **Unified Basketball Evaluation Checklist**, make notes on each player. Pay particular attention to athletes who have scored extremely low on the skills tests (more than 25% below the average partner score) and partners who scored extremely high (more than 25% above the average athlete score).

Note: point guards are the best players on the team and have the highest functioning skill level. You have no offense unless you can get the ball up the court and to other teammates.

**Step 7:** *Have a meeting of the Assessment Team to discuss their ratings.*

- (1) Make a preliminary decision about appropriate versus inappropriate athletes and partners.
- (2) Based upon observations and in-game skills and tactics assessments of players, move athletes and or partners to teams, if needed, to create balance. When creating balanced teams, make sure there are ball handlers, shooters, and rebounders represented on each one.

**Step 8:** *Inform all participants about the decision of the Assessment Team.*

Invite appropriate participants to the next practice. Discuss alternative participation options for participants who have been assessed as “inappropriate”. Such options may include becoming a coach or training partner. Options may also include joining a different Unified Sports® team of more comparable skill, joining a traditional Special Olympics team, or trying out for a different Unified sport.

**Step 9:** *Periodically review the effectiveness of the initial assessment.*

#### **4.5 Unified Basketball Evaluation Checklist – Determine Appropriateness of Team Members:**

This is helpful tool regarding the appropriateness of all team members for this Unified sport during the evaluation team play. It also appears in the Unified Sports® Handbook page 32-45.

1) Is there a player(s) on the team who, when competing to his/her highest ability level, would place other players on the team or on an opposing team at risk of injury?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

2) Is the composition of the team such that **ALL** players without an intellectual disability are higher skilled than players with an intellectual disability?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

3) In order for a game to be played by the rules and at the same time allow for safe and meaningful involvement of all team members, must certain teammates **significantly lower** their level of skill and not compete as hard as they are capable?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

4) Are there players on the team who are so highly skilled that no other member of the team could defend him or her in a competitive situation? (Specifically, this person could score at any time he or she chooses.)

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

5) Are there players on the team who do not have the sport’s skills or understanding of the rules necessary to compete according to the rules in a competitive situation? Do they need significant assistance from teammates? Must the rules be significantly modified above and beyond Special Olympics Sports Rules adaptations?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

6) Are there players on the team who in a competitive situation rarely touch the ball or participate in competition because of their low ability level?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

7) Are there players on the team who do not attend more than 50% of the practices during a season?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If the answer to any of the above questions is “yes”, your team is probably inappropriate for entry in official Special Olympics Unified Sports® competition according to “Meaningful Involvement” guidelines.

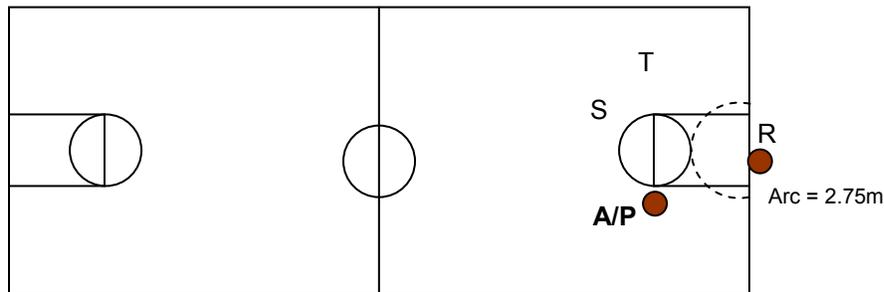
#### **4.6 Leadership Opportunities for Athletes**

*The goal is to promote and provide opportunities for capable athletes to be leaders on the team.*

- Plan for opportunities to involve athletes as captains, training assistants, team manager, officials, etc.
- Use team meetings to involve athletes in the planning process.
- Encourage athletes to evaluate practices and games.
- Encourage athletes to be ambassadors of the program (player recruitment and public speaking).



## 5.2 Unified Basketball SAT – Perimeter Shooting



### EQUIPMENT

Two basketballs, court tape, measuring tape, stopwatch, clipboard, and pen/pencil

### SET-UP

1. Take the end of the measuring tape and place it directly under the basket. Measure a 2.75 meter arc out from this point and mark it with court tape.
2. The top of the arc will intersect with the free throw restraining circle.

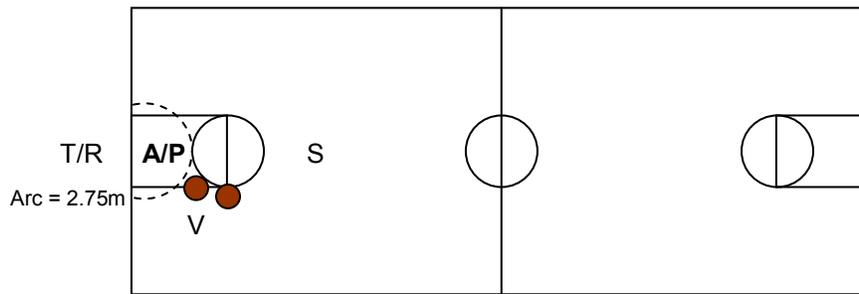
### TEST

1. Each player (Athlete/Partner) is given 60 seconds for this test.
2. The player receives the basketball at the free throw line.
3. When the start command is given, the player may dribble to any spot *outside of the arc* and shoot.
4. The player then rebounds the basketball (made or missed shot), dribbles to any spot outside of the arc line, and shoots again.
5. This continues for the duration of the 60 second trial.
6. A back-up basketball is placed on the floor behind the basket and can be used by the player if the first ball bounces away.
7. Volunteer 1 serves as the timer and give the athlete the ball to begin the test. Volunteer 2 serves as the official scorer/recorder. Volunteer 3 retrieves any errant balls and places them on the floor behind the basket if required.

### SCORING

1. Two points are awarded for every shot made during the 60 second time period.

### 5.3 Unified Basketball SAT – Rebounding



#### EQUIPMENT

Two basketballs, court tape, measuring tape, stopwatch, clipboard, pen/pencil

#### SET-UP

1. Take the end of the measuring tape and place it directly under the basket. Measure a 2.75 meter arc out from this point and mark it with court tape.
2. The top of the arc will intersect with the free throw restraining circle.
3. ***This is the exact set-up as in the Perimeter Shooting SAT.***

#### TEST

1. Each player (Athlete/Partner) is given 60 seconds for this test.
2. Volunteer 1 (the shooter) should have basketball experience. He/she is positioned anywhere behind the arc with a basketball, to the left or the right of side of the foul lane, at approximately a 45 degree angle facing the basket.
3. The player is initially positioned in front of the basket inside the arc.
4. At the start command, the volunteer shoots the ball at either the rim or the backboard at the side of the basket, purposely missing the shot in order to produce a rebounding opportunity.
5. The player attempts to rebound the ball once it hits the rim or backboard, and then passes it back to Volunteer 1 (the shooter).
6. Volunteer 1 continues to move to a different position around the arc. While doing this, Volunteer 1 repeats shooting the ball and missing the shot until 60 seconds have expired.
7. A back-up basketball is placed on the floor next to Volunteer 1 in case a shot cannot be rebounded (that is, ball falls short and does not hit the backboard or ball takes a strange bounce off the rim and travels a far distance beyond the rebounding zone, etc.). In instances such as these, Volunteer 1 will tell the player to disregard that particular shot and focus on the next shot, which will be taken with the back-up basketball.
8. Volunteer 2 serves as the timer and, if necessary, ball retriever for errant shots. Volunteer 3 serves as the official scorer/recorder.

#### SCORING

1. Two points are awarded for every successful rebound a player makes while jumping off the ground. Having control of the ball constitutes a successful rebound. A player must have control while both feet are off the floor in order to receive two points.
2. One point is awarded for every successful rebound a player makes if he/she grabs the ball when their feet are touching the floor. The ball must be rebounded in flight and cannot touch the floor in order for it to be considered a successful attempt.
3. A player's final score is the sum total of successful rebounds he/she retrieves during the 60 second test.



## **Practical Experience with Players/Teammates (Athletes and Partners)**

### **8. WARM-UP AND STRETCHING ACTIVITIES WITH A BALL – BASKETBALL SPECIFIC**

### **9. ASSESSMENT STATIONS**

*Use high ability player [athlete or partner] to demonstrate. Allow one practice to get the feel for the activity. Be sure all players understand the task, but keep instruction at a minimum. If a player has difficulty, help them understand the task and let them re-start. The goal is to get as accurate a measure of the player's ability.*

- *Dribbling SAT*
- *Perimeter Shooting SAT*
- *Rebounding SAT*

### **10. FORMING TEAMS & SCRIMMAGING**

*Form teams based on SATs' scores. Have scrimmage vests to identify each team. Use a progression of offense with no defense and gradually add defensive players. Use visual aids to assist in positioning and transition from offense to defense to offense. Determine appropriateness of all team members.*

- *Meet to assess team equity and move players as necessary.*
- *Scrimmage again to ensure team equity.*

### **11. COOL-DOWN AND TEAM TALK**

*Go through big muscle group stretches such as sitting toe touch with both legs out straight and then one leg at a time with opposite leg bent and bottom of foot touching straight leg. (Suggest doing this in a big circle in the middle of the gym floor.) Then affirm each player's effort and contribution to the team experience.*

## **Debriefing the Practical Session; Evaluation; Closing; Certification**

- Evaluate the assessment process: regarding layout, equipment, instructions, etc.
- Discuss the readjustment process and creation of teams after they have played; talk about what adjustments may be appropriate. (Was there player dominance; how would you adjust accordingly? What of skill and game readiness?)
- Explore coaching strategies for various team compositions and insight on what each learned.
- Identify training needs, coach education, and behavior management issues. (See "Athlete Behavior Characteristics and Strategies to Improve Learning" handout.
- Go over certification process and submission of completed forms.
- Evaluate the training.

# Unified Sports® Course Module 2 – Unified Basketball

## Agenda

- 45 mins.      **Classroom Session - Unified Sports® Module 1**
- Welcome; Introductions; Objectives of the Training
  - Basics of Unified Basketball
  - Partner Eligibility; Selection of Team; Rules; Competition Issues, etc.
  - Getting into the Schools (*if not provided in Module 1*)
  - Preparation for On-court Activity Session to Follow
- 1 hr. 30 mins.      **Activity Session on Court with Coaches – Prep. for Team Composition**
- Warm-up and Stretching  
*Economy of Training; Matching Participants; Grouping for Assessments*
  - Basketball Skills Assessment Tests (*Dribbling, Perimeter Shooting, and Rebounding*)  
*Step 1: Skills Assessment Tests*  
*Step 2: Team Play Assessment Using Checklist to Determine Appropriateness*  
*Step 3: Forming Teams*
  - Assessment of Team Play  
*Evaluating Appropriateness of Teammates (Requisite Skills; Safety)*  
*Ensuring Equity among Teams*
  - Going over Upcoming Activity Session and Assignment of Tasks and Teams
- 15 mins.      Break (Meet and greet players upon arrival; provide name tags)
- 1 hr 30 mins.      **Activity Session with Players (Athletes & Partners); Responsibilities Identified**
- Warm-up and Stretching- \_\_\_\_\_
  - Stations: (SATs)  
*1 – Dribbling - \_\_\_\_\_*  
*2 – Perimeter Shooting - \_\_\_\_\_*  
*3 – Rebounding - \_\_\_\_\_*
  - Form Teams Based on SATs' Scores
  - Team Play – *Assessments (playing three 5-min. games among teams)*
  - Feedback on Appropriateness of Members (*moving athletes/partners accordingly*)
  - Scrimmage in New Teams (*Evaluation to determine appropriateness*)
  - Cool-down and Team Talk (*wrapping up session; lessons learned; recognition*)
- 45 mins.      **Classroom Wrap-Up Session**
- Debriefing Day and Review of Key Points (Situations)
  - Challenges: Competition Issues
  - Addendum for Coaches' Training: Drills; Team Play; Team Cohesion; Coaching Guidelines
  - Comments; Questions Regarding Program; Concerns
  - Certification Process
  - Course Evaluation

### Resources for Unified Basketball Training

Building a Successful Unified Sports® Program DVD, Unified Sports® Handbook; Player Assessment Guidelines; Special Olympics Basketball Rules and Coaching Guides; Course Agenda; Evaluation Form; Certification Form

# Addendum

## 11. SIMPLE OFFENSE & DEFENSE FOR DIVERSE TEAM MEMBERS

### 11.1 Offense

- By teaching all players one offense and one defense that maximizes everyone's abilities, the coach can see the appropriateness of team members. All players must observe demonstration, respond to one or two-part instructions, repeat the actions, and then apply in game-like situations.
- Teach the simplest offense that will accommodate the lowest ability athletes. Take advantage of what each player can do, so that all players contribute. (*See Coaching Guide and handouts.*)

Players:

- 1 = point guard (best all-around player, regardless of size)
- 2 = off guard (passer; could be second weakest player on team)
- 3 = small forward (could be weakest player on team; by putting the player on one side, able to be next to side line with one perspective and away from the crowd)
- 4 = baseline player (mobile; rebounder)
- 5 = center (rebounder; passer; inside shooter)

Place athletes in their "set-up" spots. Teach each one their movement based on the point guards "Go" cue and center's initial movement. When the center moves, all cut to their next spots. The cutting provides movement into open areas. The positions also provide 3 near outlets so that the point guard can find an open player, and there are 3 people in rebounding position.

The progression is as follows:

- Teach their positions on the half-court without defense. The point guard passes and always cuts to the basket looking for a return pass or to rebound. If he/she does not get the ball, he/she continues to the near or far corner but will always be active to rebound or receive a pass.
- All offensive players line up at the half-court. There is still no defense. The coach cues the team to "set up" as the coach throws the ball to the point guard. The point guard keeps the ball alive as the other players take their positions. On the "go" cue from the point guard, the players cut to their next positions.
- All offensive players line up at the half court; two then three defensive players take their positions in a zone. The offense is run.
- All offensive players are at the other foul line area and repeat above running into their positions on "offense" and "set up".
- All offensive players are on defense at the opposite end of the court. A shot is taken; a defender rebounds the ball and passes the ball to the point guard who has come to get it. All players now run to their "set-up" positions on offense. Note: players are able to run down on the same side of the court to their positions. This progression prepares all players for a true transition from defense to offense.

### 11.2 Defense

- Teach a simple zone defense; again, take advantage of what each player can do, so that all players contribute. The 2-1-2 or 2-3 zone is the easiest zone to teach for all ability levels.

Players (placement based on looking out from under the basket):

- Place the best all-around player (#1) in the middle of the zone. That person controls the defense, is the most active, and can stop/rebound the ball.
- The best rebounder (#4) is to the right of the basket and in front of the basket.
- The center (#5) is to the left and in front of the basket.
- The small forward (#3) [or weakest player] is at top of the free throw and lane lines on left side.
- The off guard (#2) [or next weakest player] could be placed on the right side of free throw and lane lines.

Teach defensive positioning in relationship to the ball and the side of the court.

- Teach each player his/her particular area. Use already existing lines on the floor and inside the 3-point arc.
- With each movement of the ball, “step to the ball” and “belly to the ball”.
- When the ball moves, everyone moves.
- 4-5 offensive players are on the outside of the zone and passing the ball around so that the defense can practice their movement.
- When the ball goes inside or over their head, all “collapse”. The lane is seen as “death valley”. Make concepts concrete for all.
- When the ball is shot, the player who rebounded the ball looks for and passes the ball to the point guard.

Teach stopping the ball when a player tries to drive through a gap between two defensive players.

- The cue is “close the door” on the ball beginning through this gap. It is like a sliding glass door as two players step together to close the gap.
  - The ball is passed to a player; that player now tries to drive a gap between two defenders.
  - Once the ball is picked up and is passed, all defenders “step to the ball” and “belly to the ball” no matter where the ball went.
  - The next offensive player tries to drive through a gap; the nearest defenders “close the door”.
- Review transition...now practice going from defense to offense to defense and using appropriate/consistent cues.

### ***11.3 Adjustment of Teams Based on Ability as Seen During Competition***

- Mixed Team Adjustments  
Most teams will actually fall into the “Mixed Team” category. There will be athletes at all ends of the spectrum. The critical decision for a coach to make is to place athletes in the offense and defense so they can make a contribution or develop specific skills to make a contribution. Information regarding simple offense and zone defense player placement above identifies such.
- Outstanding 1-2 Players within Team and Adjustments  
More freedom is given to higher ability players within both the offense and defense. It is not a matter of changing the offense or defense. Higher ability players can find options once the offense is started. Simply stated, the highest ability athletes are free to move to any open space once the offense is started. On defense, they are placed in the lane or near the lane to control the defense, form traps, or play for steals.

## **12. GROUP DYNAMICS**

*This section gives coaches some additional information on how to facilitate positive player interaction, meeting both the safety and interpersonal needs of the participants.*

### ***12.1 Matching Participants***

An important responsibility of the coach is to match athletes in pairs or small groups for training and skill development. Inappropriate matching may lead to unnecessary injury or lessen the effectiveness of the training experience. The coach should consider the level of skill, sport experience, cognitive functioning in pairing for warm-up and group activities, and the obvious physical characteristics of height, weight, and fitness level when the task involves body contact.

### ***12.2 Grouping for Drills***

The most effective learning occurs when athletes are actively learning by doing. Instruction designed for small groups and pairs will maximize time on task and aid in providing critical feedback on performance. In designing small groups for a unified mixed or training team model, you can either place athletes/partners with similar ability in the same group, or design groups of mixed ability. In all cases there should be a representative number of athletes and partners.

The following recommendations are useful in making decisions about grouping players:

- When a skill, rule, or strategy is being taught that all your players need to know, use a single group for instruction, but then allow for small groups of similar ability to practice the skill at various learning stations.
- When the activity involves combination drills or team tactics, use multiple groups of mixed ability for practice. Some players will seem to play better with certain other players, but encourage all players to get to know how to perform their best in any group situation.
- Establish new groups or pairs for practicing different skills. Avoid similar player pairing for more than one or two activities a practice.
- Have a prepared plan for how to group or pair athletes for each activity. Have player's self-select partners once in a while to build a sense of control and competence, but be careful of cliques that may form or devaluing of less skilled athletes.

### ***12.3 Team Dynamics***

As in all sports, the need for most athletes to belong or affiliate with other team members is of critical importance. The process of making friends and developing certain roles within the group is as much a part of sport as training and competition. Coaches should be especially alert at the beginning of the season when teammates are getting to know each other and judgments about others are being developed.

A key component in the genuine integration for special populations in programs like Unified Sports® is the attitude, knowledge and subsequent behavior of the coach. Genuine integration of athletes and partners relies on three key factors, all influenced by the coach: (a) interaction between athletes, (b) perception of special treatment given the athlete or partner by the coach, (c) recognition and acceptance of individual impairments in preparing athletes to successfully train and compete with partners. The challenge of Unified Sports® is to help people without intellectual disability integrate into the previously exclusionary teams of Special Olympics. Coaches need to plan, implement and evaluate actions to assure meaningful participation and enhanced social development of all players. The type of activity, amount of accommodation necessary, and intensity of competition are considered in structuring the sport experience. Activities should foster respect for the uniqueness of everyone's abilities, motivation and contribution to the unified sport team. Developing sport skills is the foremost task of the coach since athletes who are not competent to meet the demands of the Unified Sports® setting and related social roles, risk disapproval from teammates and others, along with blows to self-esteem. The risks of winning and losing in integrated programs are compounded for the athlete.

Group cohesion is the term to describe the tendency for members of a group to stick together and remain united as they work toward collective goals and social purposes. Athletes and partners in cohesive teams will display more positive attitudes, increased confidence and maximize sport performance. Group cohesion can be improved by the following suggestions:

- Use small groups (3-6 people) for practice drills and other team tasks when possible.
- Set team goals that athletes and partners understand and success can be easily determined.
- Clarify each team member's role on the team
- Encourage all players to communicate by calling each other by their name
- Create opportunities for general communication among players before, during, and after practice or competition.
- Take the time to recognize specific players for good performance & encourage teammates to do the same.
- Use cooperative drills that build respect for each player's contribution to the sport.

## **13. COACHING CHALLENGES**

### ***13.1 Bench Coaching Skills***

- Because of the endurance needed in this sport, coaches need to know each player's physical fitness and utilize all available player substitutions and time outs.
- Planning and practicing specific substitution assignments will better prepare your team for game situations and needed adjustments.
- Substitute so that an individual has enough time for meaningful play.
- Avoid making a substitution immediately after a player error. Allow a player an opportunity to adjust to the situation and learn from the experience.

- Any time your team looks out of control or confused, a time out with specific player outcomes is needed. Be direct and stay calm. Yelling and screaming will not help.
- Welcome all players back to the bench.
- Use positive instruction and always end your time out on an encouraging note. For example, say: “stay to the sideline and corner” as opposed to “get out of the lane”.
- Be specific and consistent in giving advice/direction from the bench. Generate some cue words that your team understands and will lead to desired actions.
- Use different cues on offense from cues used on defense so that each team member reacts accordingly. For example, say: “set up” on offense and “find your spot” on defense.
- Less is better; let your athletes play. Use cue words sparingly to elicit desired adjustments.

### ***13.2 Competition Issues (such as player dominance and training team competition)***

- Playing to “win” is part of the Olympic Spirit and should be embraced by all players as an appropriate goal. However, remember the effort and courage in trying to win should equally be rewarded by the coach and players.
- All teams may have 1 or 2 outstanding players. Conduct an upfront discussion on player dominance and the differences between ideal, mixed and training teams.
- If the dominant player happens to be an athlete, the coach needs to assist that athlete in finding a more appropriate team for future participation. However, in the moment, assign the player a different position to better balance the team.
- In training teams, ask the highest functioning players not to play down, but play differently. A partner’s role is to keep the ball in play, make transitions, help advance the play of lesser ability players, etc.
- Remember, a player can dominate without scoring (such as rebounding or bringing the ball down the court.) A coach should assist each player develop a variety of skills contributing to team play.
- Ongoing competition for all teams is essential. Competition for a training team should be viewed as part of the learning process.
- Teach your athletes to appreciate your opponent, the referees, and the spirit of the game. Good sports are winners every time.

### ***13.3 Appropriate Use of Assistant Coaches***

- Everyone should have a part to play on the team, including the assistant coaches.
- Divide the labor; ensure that each assistant coach has a role.
  - Some may serve to conduct the warm-up and stretching as well as cool-down and team talk aspects of practice.
  - Some may be in charge of a specific station through out the season, such as ball handling and dribbling, shooting, rebounding, 3-on-3, etc.
  - Others may serve as equipment managers; others may also be in charge of charting performance.
  - Others may be in charge of the conditioning and/or strength training aspects.
  - Each coach may be responsible for the development of specific players.
- Utilize assistant coaches in season and practice planning.
- Reward and acknowledge assistant coach efforts in front of the team, parents and peers.