



# Unified Open Water Swim Observers One Sheet

## Unified Sports - MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

Special Olympics Unified Sports combines people with and without intellectual disabilities on sports teams for training and competition. People with intellectual disabilities are classified as Special Olympics Athletes, and people without intellectual disabilities are classified as Unified Partners. At the World Games level, all Unified Sports are meant to be competitive.

Unified Sports teams need to emphasize the principle of meaningful involvement which ensures every member is presented with opportunities to contribute to their team's performance. Teams should be composed of players who are of similar age and ability levels. This decreases the potential for domination by higher ability teammates. A 2015 World Games Unified Competition Protocol will identify the steps that will be taken to minimize the risk of having poor quality Unified Sports competition at the 2015 World Games.

**Sport:** Unified Open Water Swim

**How it works:** Unified Open Water Swimming combines one Special Olympics Athlete with one Unified Partner. The swimmers start and stay together as a team during the race. Awards are determined based upon the finish time of the last teammate to cross the finish line.

**Role of observers:** Unified Sports observers are in place to assist the Competition Management Staff and Sport Technical Delegate. Their role is to be an objective observer of the Unified Sports teams, with an emphasis on watching and noting patterns of meaningful involvement. The observers should never interfere with the competition or confront players, coaches or officials. All findings should be reported to Competition Management Staff.

**Examples of Meaningful Involvement NOT being followed:**

1. Teammates are not swimming together or within 10 meters of each other at all times during the race.
2. Teammates do not finish the race together or cross the finish line within 10 seconds of each other.
3. One teammate continually advances ahead and then slows down or stops to allow the other teammate to catch up.
4. One teammate slows their swim pace with breaststroke or sidestroke.
5. Swim pace is determined solely by one teammate.

**What to do if you see any of the above:**

- Do not approach the players, coaches or officials
- Continue to observe and determine if this is a pattern of behavior, or an isolated occurrence
- Document what you observe in the notes section below
- If you think an unfavorable pattern of behavior is identified, contact the Competition Management Staff

**Important Notes:**

- ✓ Player dominance and meaningful involvement may include or exclude both athletes and partners.

**Sport:** Unified Open Water Swim



Player Name(s)	
Country (if known)	
Cap Color/Number	
Comments	

Player Name(s)	
Country (if known)	
Cap Color/Number	
Comments	

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