



# Unified Champion Schools Onboarding Learning Series 2025

**Coach Training and Unified Sports in Schools**  
**Jeff Lahart, Fiona Murray (SOI Sport and Competition)**

# Unified Sports



**Teammates** with and without ID **training and competing** together as a pathway to **friendship and social inclusion**



[What is Unified Sports?](#) (4 mins)



[Unified Sports Models Video](#) (8 mins)



[Unified Sports in Basketball](#) (principles apply across most team sports)



[The Principle of Meaningful Involvement](#)



# What is a high-quality Unified Sports Programme?





# Why does good coaching matter?

***A good coach can change a game ... A great coach can change a life.***

**John Wooden**



# Having a GREAT coach is a human right!



United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Article 30** enshrines the rights of persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities

And

“with appropriate instruction”



This means that simply offering the chance to play sport is **not good enough**, we **MUST** provide the chance to play sport, with appropriate instruction



# So what is a great coach?

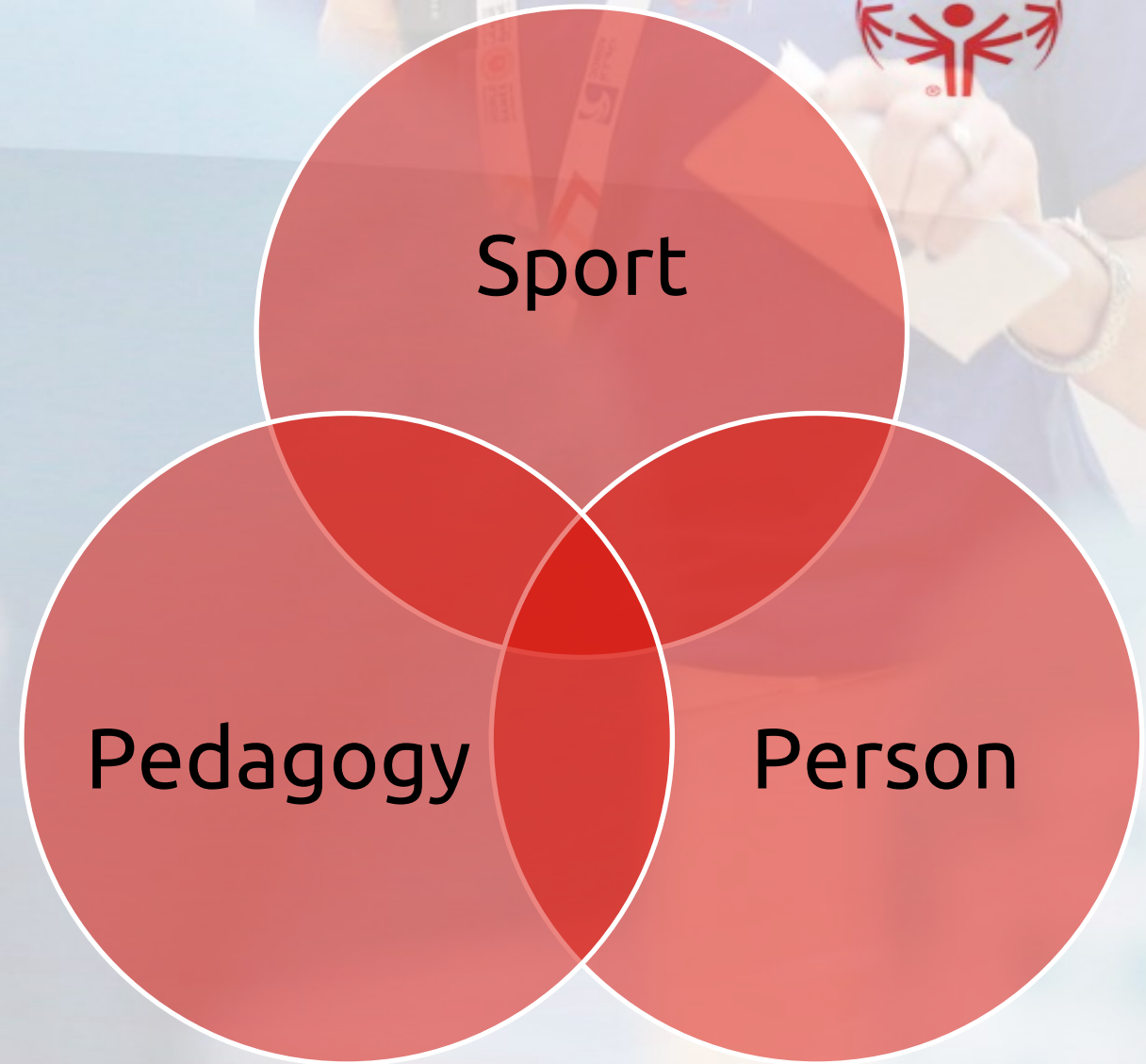
Knowledge and skills in 3 key areas

Support learning and development

Dual focus – Sport Performance and Personal Development.

Athletes' needs at the centre!

**ALWAYS**





# What does this mean for recruiting Coaches?

## Where do I start?

- What sport(s) will you offer?
- Look at your school community – who might be involved?
- Remember that a coach is not just an activity supervisor
- You will need a team of coaches (experience may vary)
- Recruitment is Step 1 – you must educate, support and develop to retain!
- [Coach Recruitment and Retention Guide](#) (All approved languages)

# Coach Education Delivery:



## Types of Coach Education Delivery



E-Learning

In-Person



Online  
(Zoom/Teams)

Hybrid  
Combination of online  
and in-person





# Unified Sports Coach Education



Complete the Special Olympics Unified Sports Coach education course on the e-learning platform.

**Gives you an understanding of:**

- ▶ Unified Sports, and its models
- ▶ The Principle of Meaningful Involvement (POMI)
- ▶ How to structure a Unified Sports team



# Program's Minimum Coach Education Standards



## Minimum Standards for Coaches

All coaches must meet the minimum education standards within their SO Programme

If no standards exist, coaches must at minimum complete:

- ▶ Level 1: Sport Assistant
- ▶ Level 2: Coaching Assistant
- ▶ Level 3: Coach
- ▶ And a Sport Specific Coach Education course (Delivered by National Sport Federation or SO Program)

Level 1, 2, 3 courses available at [elearn.specialolympics.org](https://elearn.specialolympics.org)

# Delivering Coach Education



**Special Olympics general orientation is NOT Coach Education!**

- ▶ Yes it's a good idea to provide this education also, but it is not coach education.
- ▶ You can provide this information before any coach education takes place.

**Coach Education must focus on HOW TO COACH**

This may include educating coaches about specific aspects of Special Olympics sport, including:

- Divisioning,
- Advancement
- Random selection
- Event management

However, these topics alone are not Coach Education



# Delivering Coach Education



## Coach Education must include:

- ▶ How to plan and structure a training session and a training season
- ▶ How to coach a skill/activity
- ▶ How to adjust or adapt activities to meet the needs of the athlete

## Coach Education should include opportunities for coaches to experience and practice:

- ▶ Planning coaching activities
- ▶ Delivering coaching activities (i.e. actively coaching peers, or SO athletes)
- ▶ Receiving feedback, Reviewing and evaluating their planning and coaching activities with coach developers and peers



# Coaching Resources



Available in the Dropbox

Some of note:

- ▶ Sport Specific Resource Pages
  - ▶ Coach Webinar Series Dashboard
  - ▶ Sport Partner Resources
    - ▶ ICOACHKIDS
- Utilise experienced coaches within your program – as mentors.
  - Encourage coaches to reflect on their actions.
  - Talk with the athletes – what do they want from their coaches?