Unified Sports Evaluation Report

July, 2015

Contents

Executive Summary

Special Olympics Unified Sports provides people with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) the opportunity to play sports together. In partnership with ESPN, Special Olympics International (SOI) conducted an evaluation of Unified Sports programs across the globe. The evaluation sought to address the following questions -

1. Does Unified Sports improve social inclusion among athletes (Special Olympics participants with intellectual disabilities) and partners (Special Olympics participants without intellectual disabilities) as well as in the broader community?
2. Does Unified Sports impact athletes' and partners' health, physical activity, and sports participation outside of Special Olympics?
3. What are the demographics of Unified Sports athletes and partners?
4. What are the current levels of awareness about Unified Sports in the general public and how are Special Olympics' activities affecting these levels?

These questions were addressed through a Unified Sports player survey in ESPN market Programs, interviews with Unified Sports coaches, a review of pre-existing data from Project UNIFY (Special Olympics' school-based initiative), and a study assessing public awareness of Unified Sports. This report discusses the activities associated with the first three questions and includes two main sections: 1) Unified Sports in United States School Settings and 2) Unified Sports player survey and coach interviews.

Unified Sports in United States School Settings

A secondary analysis of Project UNIFY data from the past three years focused on helping to understand interactions between students with and without disabilities and perceptions of social inclusion in schools. The sample included 2,377 students (including 69 students from special education) who participated in a school-based Unified Sports program. Data collected from these Unified Sports participants were compared to data collected from students who were exposed to Project Unify but did not play Unified Sports.

Results showed that students with and without disabilities interact more often in school settings through Unified Sports participation. Unified Sports participants also had more positive perceptions about including students with ID in school. Results included -

- 79% of Unified Sports participants talked to a student with ID during free time at school, compared to 57% of secondary participants.
- 41% of Unified Sports participants ate lunch at school with a student with ID, compared to 19% of secondary participants.
- 78% of participants believed that students with ID contribute to the class, compared to 65% of secondary participants.

Qualitative results also support that participation in Unified Sports promotes positive peer interactions and has the potential to change students' social inclusive attitudes and behavior.

One limitation in this analysis was the limited perspectives of students with ID. Qualitative interviews and/or focus groups could be useful to gain more in depth understanding of their perspectives moving forward. Additionally, future evaluation work should further explore the perspectives of parents and coaches and assess the program's impact on sports skills, health, and/or physical activity levels. Special Olympics also should consider collecting longitudinal data to understand the long-term impact of the program, as well as identifying the best ways to measure social inclusion in Unified Sports and across other programs.

Unified Sports player survey and coach interviews

In 2014, 13 grants were provided to four U.S. states and nine countries to grow Unified Sports in their Program. Nine of these Programs participated in this evaluation: North Carolina, Southern California, Florida, Washington, Mexico, Brazil, India, Indonesia, and China. A survey for Unified Sports participants (athletes and partners) was created to address the first three priority evaluation questions. Long and short versions of this survey were created to accommodate differences in Program capacity, and Programs were given the option to conduct the survey on paper, or electronically using tablets and offline. SO received 1,715 responses to its Unified Sports Player Survey from across the nine Programs.

The majority of survey respondents (82%) were 24 years of age and younger. Approximately half of the respondents reported having ID (n=869), and 44% reported they did not have ID. The vast majority of Player Survey respondents reported positive results from their experiences with Unified Sports. For example, as a result of participating in Unified Sports -

- 89% of the respondents said they're more comfortable talking to people with ID
- 83% of participants reported that they do more activities in their community
- 83% of athletes reported that they have more friends without intellectual disabilities
- 94% of participants reported that they feel healthier
- 91% of participants reported their sports skills improved

When asked about friends on their team, 83% of participants reported that they have at least one friend they like to do things with from their Unified Sports team. Of the respondents without ID, 48% reported that their closest friend on the team had ID. When asked about the nature of their social interactions and activities, respondents were most likely to report that they would choose their closest friend as a partner in a game (75%) or stand up for him or her if people were being mean (71%). They were less likely to report that they would share a secret with a friend (50%) or friend him/her on Facebook (51%).

Meanwhile, to supplement the Player Survey, eight coach interviews were conducted with coaches from Southern California and Florida. During these interviews, coaches discussed ways in which they have promoted social inclusion on their teams, the benefits of Unified Sports, and changes they have seen in their athletes and partners. When asked about the biggest benefits of Unified Sports for athletes, several coaches mentioned improved confidence, enhanced communication and improved social inclusion, while the most frequent benefit that coaches cited for partners was that they gained an understanding of diversity. As a result of Unified Sports, all coaches noticed changes in communication skills and sports skills among athletes, partners, or both. Many coaches discussed how athletes and partners not only were friends on the court, but would also spend time together outside of Unified Sports, and they also reported seeing partners become allies for athletes in schools to combat bullying.

Overall, the evaluation findings were valuable. However, limitations of the Player Survey included sampling/selection bias, and the use of scales that have not been tested for reliability or validity. The major limitations of the coach interviews were small sample size and only including coaches from the United States. Moving forward, Special Olympics should continue to refine and improve the Unified Sports player survey based on lessons learned from this project. Future research and evaluation should include the creation and validation of a social inclusion scale, an exploration of Unified Sports impact on school-based outcomes (e.g. dropout rates), and a focus on the role of coaches on promoting of social inclusion, health, and physical fitness among athletes and partners.

Introduction

Special Olympics Unified Sports provides people with and without intellectual disabilities the opportunity to play sports together. In partnership with ESPN, Special Olympics International (SOI) conducted an evaluation of Unified Sports programs across the globe. The evaluation sought to address the following questions.

5. Does Unified Sports improve social inclusion among athletes (Special Olympics participants with intellectual disabilities) and partners (Special Olympics participants without intellectual disabilities) as well as in the broader community?
6. Does Unified Sports impact athletes' and partners' health, physical activity, and sports participation outside of Special Olympics?
7. What are the demographics of Unified Sports athletes and partners?
8. What are the current levels of awareness about Unified Sports in the general public and how are Special Olympics' activities affecting these levels?

To address these questions, SOI conducted a survey with Unified Sports athletes and partners (collectively known as players) in nine Special Olympics Programs, including four states in the United States (Washington, Florida, Southern California, and North Carolina) and five additional countries (Brazil, Mexico, India, Indonesia, and China). In addition to conducting a Unified Sports Player Survey, through conversations with experts in the field of Unified Sports, it became apparent that the perspective of the coach was crucial to answering the three priority questions and to contextualizing the player responses. Thus, phone interviews were conducted with Special Olympics coaches in two U.S. Programs to begin to unpack the coach perspective on developing social inclusion on his/her team and best practices for the future. SOI also conducted secondary data analysis using data from past evaluations of Special Olympics' school-based program, Project UNIFY. The data was reframed to determine the impact of Unified Sports in U.S. school settings. Finally, SOI partnered with Nielsen to collect baseline data on the current levels of awareness of Unified Sports among the general public in the U.S.

Using this combination of research activities, SOI has begun to answer the four priority questions above. The following report will discuss the activities associated with the first three priority questions, as well as questions to guide future research in the field of Unified Sports. This report includes two main sections: 1) Unified Sports in United States School Settings and 2) Unified Sports player survey and coach interviews.

Section I: Unified Sports in United States School Settings

Background and Statement of Purpose

Since the 1970s, education policy and legislation in the United States has mandated that public schools include and accommodate students with intellectual disabilities (ID) (Young, Ne'eman, & Gelser, 2011). This shift represented a departure from previous policies and practices, which categorically denied students with ID access to public education or relegated them to segregated school facilities (Ferri & Connor, 2005). As a result of this shift toward integrated education, students with ID are now more likely to attend mainstream schools alongside their peers without disabilities. Laws have thus facilitated their *physical* presence and inclusion in public schools. *Social* inclusion in the school environment, however, still eludes many students with ID.

Indeed, students with disabilities experience bullying in school more often than students without disabilities (Carter & Spencer, 2006). They are disproportionately likely to face peer rejection (Hodges and Perry, 1996). Non-disabled students report that they have limited contact with students with ID; non-disabled students also state that they believe students with ID are capable of participating in non-academic classes, but not in academic classes (Siperstein, Parker, Bardon, and Widaman, 2007). These negative social experiences reduce students with disabilities' motivation to stay in school. Students with disabilities are more likely to drop out of school than their non-disabled peers. In the 2011-2012 school year, 80% of students without disabilities earned a high school diploma, compared with only 61% of students who participated in special education (Diament, 2014).

To improve and enrich the experiences of all students, especially those with ID, Special Olympics (SO) has delivered inclusive school-based sports programs for the past 30 years. Specifically, the SO Unified Sports® program is a key intervention that brings students with and without ID together for sports training and competition. Beyond mere physical inclusion, Unified Sports forges attitude change, friendships, and social inclusion both on and off the playing field. People with ID feel a sense of belonging; they interact with others, develop mutually rewarding relationships, are recognized as contributors and are received with acceptance and respect. As a result, schools are more welcoming and inclusive. Students with ID can more meaningfully exercise their rights to integration.

The purpose of the present analysis is to examine existing evidence about the efficacy of Unified Sports as a change agent in school settings. SO delivers Unified Sports programs in schools and among people of all ages in colleges, universities, and community settings around the world. Unified Sports is the fastest growing program in the Special Olympics Movement, with 704,230 participants world-wide in 2013. The present analysis, however, focuses exclusively on school-based programming in the United States. The overriding goal of Unified Sports is to promote social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences. Consequently, this analysis coalesces existing research and evaluation knowledge to glean key findings about Unified Sports' effectiveness in fostering social inclusion. This analysis will also identify gaps in the knowledge base and strategies to address these gaps. Finally, as SO

seeks to measure more rigorously its contributions to social inclusion, for Unified Sports and all SO programs, this analysis concludes with recommendations for critical issues to consider.

Aims and Methods

This analysis leverages existing SO research and evaluation data to build understanding about how Unified Sports contributes to social inclusion in school settings. Specifically, this report describes findings from a secondary analysis of data collected through the SO Project UNIFY program evaluation over the course of three years in more than 1,500 schools across the United States. Project UNIFY is a school-based strategy that uses inclusive clubs and school-wide activities to accelerate and amplify the Unified Sports experience and impact. The specific objectives of Project UNIFY are as follows: 1) to create school communities of acceptance where students with ID feel welcome and are routinely included in, and feel a part of, all school activities, opportunities, and functions; 2) to communicate the value of SO as a community partner that offers programming to schools that benefits all students; and, 3) to promote positive attitudes among students without disabilities toward their peers with ID. Project UNIFY's stated purpose is to *activate youth to develop school communities where all young people are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with ID by utilizing the existing programs of Special Olympics, as well as new, student-led initiatives*. Unified Sports, Project UNIFY, and all SO programs value an ecological systems theory of change. Ecological systems theory posits that how a person interacts with his or her social environment significantly influences development, attitudes, and behavior. This approach enables SO to target interventions not only at the individual with ID, but also at the different social environments with which the person interfaces (e.g., family, school, community).

With financial support from the United States Department of Education, SO and the University of Massachusetts Boston, Center for Social Development and Education (UMass Boston CSDE) have invested significant time, resources, and funds into six years of evaluation work on Project UNIFY. The purpose of the Project UNIFY evaluation, which includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches, is to guide program development and improve program quality and effectiveness. Because Unified Sports is an essential part of the Project UNIFY intervention, SO has not previously focused exclusively or separately on Unified Sports' data and outcomes within the context of the broader Project UNIFY evaluation. The present analysis thus leverages the breadth of Project UNIFY existing data to answer more specific evaluation questions related to the impacts of Unified Sports. This exercise extends the utility of these data and maximizes SO's investment in data collection. Identification of what is known through existing sources will build knowledge and guide decision-making about future investments in Unified Sports research and evaluation.

Therefore, the overriding purpose of the present analysis is *to re-contextualize Project UNIFY evaluation data to build knowledge about the impact of Unified Sports on social inclusion in integrated school settings.* Secondary analysis of existing Project UNIFY data enabled SO to cull a sample of students who participated in Unified Sports within school settings to compare with students who did not participate. The sub-sample includes **2,377** students who participated in a school-based Unified Sports program. Within this group, **69** students identified themselves as participants in special education. Survey

responses from these students were analyzed to understand interactions between students with and without disabilities and perceptions of social inclusion in schools. The present analysis pursues the following aims both for students with and without disabilities:

1. To understand the demographics of Unified Sports participants in school settings.
2. To understand how Unified Sports participation in school settings influences social interactions between students with and without disabilities.
3. To understand the perceptions of school inclusion among Unified Sports participants in school settings.

Findings from Previous Evaluations

As preface to this study's secondary data analysis findings, it is helpful to review findings from previous evaluations of the SO Unified Sports program. SO first began offering inclusive sports programming in the 1980s, and evaluation work commenced in the 1990s. Previous evaluation studies related to Unified Sports have included participants from different age groups and have focused on people with ID and participants who are not disabled. Previous studies have examined the impact of the program across diverse cultural contexts, including the United States, several countries in Europe, Turkey, and New Zealand. Methodologies have included both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The following is a brief overview of previous findings.

Riggen and Ulrich (1993) found that students with ID improved their sports skills and self-perceptions when competing in a Unified basketball program. Castagno (2001) noted improvements in self-esteem and sports skills in male Unified participants both with and without ID. Rosegard, Pegg, and Compton (2001) found that participation in a Unified Sports bowling team reduced maladaptive behaviors among participants with ID. Kirsh, Siperstein, and Parker (2008) reported that participation in Unified Sports is related to more positive self-concept for athletes with ID. In a qualitative study, Briere and Siegle (2008) also noted positive change in special education students' social self-concept after participation in Unified basketball.

Ozer et al. (2012) reported that participation in a Unified soccer program in Turkey decreased problem behaviors and increased social competence among youth with ID; Ozer et al. also found that Unified participants without ID demonstrated improved attitudes toward their peers with disabilities. In a qualitative study of Unified basketball and football programs in five European nations, McConkey, Dowling, Hassan, and Menke (2013) identified four thematic processes related to social inclusion of people with ID: 1) the personal development of athletes and partners; 2) the creation of inclusive bonds; 3) the promotion of positive perceptions of athletes; and 4) building alliances within local communities (p. 923). Sullivan and Glidden (2014) found that participation in a college-level Unified swimming team significantly improved attitudes toward people with ID among non-disabled participants. These studies in concert form the knowledge base about Unified Sports' efficacy to which the present study contributes.

Findings from Secondary Data Analysis

Building on this foundation of previous Unified Sports evaluation work, the present analysis leveraged existing data from Project UNIFY to create a sample of students who participated in integrated school-based Unified Sports programs. This sample was created using three school years of Project UNIFY data, from 2011-2014. In total, 2,377 students were identified as Unified Sports participants, including 69 who reported that they participate in special education.

For each of the data tables below, students are categorized as either Unified Sports participants or secondary participants. The Unified Sports participants are students who directly played Unified Sports in school settings. Those listed as "secondary participants" are students who did not directly engage in Unified Sports. They are labeled "secondary" participants, however, because everyone included in the sample attended a school that engaged in Project UNIFY. These data thus do not compare students who participate in Unified Sports to students who have absolutely no exposure to Special Olympics/Project UNIFY. The existence of Project UNIFY in a school presumably influences all students and the culture of the school. Consequently, "secondary participants" is the most apt description of the comparison group. These data enable us to understand these students' demographics, the nature of their interactions with other students, and their attitudes toward inclusion in the classroom. This analysis also incorporates important findings from qualitative interviews conducted by the UMass Boston CSDE evaluation team in the school year 2012-2013.

As a caveat to any discussion of findings from this analysis, however, it is important to acknowledge some limitations. First, this sample was created by merging responses from students across three separate school years. Because some schools participate in the Project UNIFY evaluation annually, the potential for duplicate responses from students exists. Another limitation of these data is that the majority of student respondents participated in Unified Sports in concert with other Project UNIFY components. These data thus primarily represent Unified Sports' impact on students and schools *when combined with* other activities. Within this dataset, it is not possible to isolate the unique value and impact of Unified Sports. Finally, this analysis has the same disadvantages of any secondary data analysis. The study questions, metrics, and study populations are not as tightly controlled in a secondary analysis. Despite these limitations, this analysis represents a cost-effective, high value investigation of Unified Sports with great potential to deepen stakeholders' understanding of impact.

Unified Sports Demographics

One key question related to Unified Sports in school settings is who participates. Data from across three years shows that Unified Sports participants are slightly more likely to be female (54%) than male (46%). Approximately 25% of Unified Sports participants are younger than 13 years of age. The majority of Unified Sports participants are white (66%), and 22% are African American. Approximately 24% of Unified Sports participants are Hispanic or Latino. Across these three years, there were 69 students who identified themselves as special education participants, which is approximately 3% of the Unified Sports participants surveyed. The following table details the demographics of Unified Sports participants

compared to students from the same schools who did not participate directly in Unified Sports.

Table 1. Demographics of Unified Sports Participants in School Settings

Variable	Unified Sports Participants	Secondary Participants
Gender	N=2,413	N=5,531
Male	46% (1,105)	51% (2,810)
Female	54% (1,308)	49% (2,721)
Age in Years	N=2,318	N=5,529
13 or younger	25% (589)	16% (879)
14	17% (390)	13% (740)
15	16% (369)	21% (1160)
16	16% (359)	19% (1056)
17	15% (346)	18% (991)
18 or older	11% (265)	13% (703)
Race	N=2,356	N=5,478
White	66% (1,530)	70% (3,815)
Black	22% (513)	17% (955)
American Indian	6% (142)	5% (296)
Asian	4% (111)	6% (307)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2% (60)	2% (105)
Hispanic or Latino?	N=2,260	N=5,396
Yes	24% (537)	19% (1,022)
No	76% (1,723)	81% (4,374)

Student Interactions and Attitudes

Each year, as part of the Project UNIFY evaluation, students complete surveys related to their interactions with students with ID, and attitudes about inclusive education. Specific instruments employed include the *Student Involvement in Project UNIFY Scale* and the *Youth Experiences Survey.* To gather students' perspectives on the climate of the school, the *School Climate Inventory* is used. To assess students' perceptions of the impact of inclusion of students with ID in the classroom, the *Impact of Classroom Inclusion Scale* is administered. Finally, to determine the actual behavior and interactions between students with and without ID, the *Student Interaction Scale* is used. The following section details survey responses from students who participated in Unified Sports within their schools.

With respect to perceptions of and interactions with students with special needs, some notable differences in responses include the following[1]:

- Unified Sports participants were more likely than their peers to report that students in their school enjoy participating in activities with students with special needs (88% compared with 78%);
- Unified Sports participants were more likely than their peers to believe students get to know their fellow students with special needs well (82% compared with 66%);
- Unified Sports participants were more likely than their peers to report that students in their schools were very interested in getting to know students with special needs (74% compared with 56%);
- Unified Sports participants were more likely than their peers to report seeing students with special needs in school every day (78% compared with 62%);
- Unified Sports participants were more likely to know someone personally with special needs (80% compared with 54%);
- Among Unified Sports participants with disabilities, 64% reported that students with special needs are picked on never or hardly ever in their schools;
- Among Unified Sports participants with disabilities, 79% reported that students with special needs are included in school activities;
- Among Unified Sports participants with disabilities, 70% reported that students with special needs are treated the same way as other students.

In general, Unified Sports participants report interacting more at school with students with special needs. Table 2 details the nature of these interactions among students who participated in Unified Sports and non-participants.

Table 2. Differences in students' reported interactions with peers with disabilities based on Unified Sports participation[2]

Type of Interaction	Unified Sports Participants	Secondary Participants
Said hello to a student with ID in the hall	92%	81%
Talked to a student with ID during free time at school	79%	57%
Participated in a club or other extracurricular with a student with ID	49%	17%
Ate lunch at school with a student with ID	41%	19%
Spent time with a student with ID outside of	37%	15%

[1] These findings are from the Project UNIFY Year 6 evaluation, conducted in school year 2013-2014.
[2] These data are from Project UNIFY's Year 5 evaluation, the 2012-2013 school year.

school		
Talked on the phone or texted with a student with ID	17%	7%
Invited a student with ID to go out with you and your friends	16%	6%

Participation in Unified Sports is not only associated with increased interactions among students with and without disabilities. Participation is also associated with more positive perceptions about including students with special needs in school. Table 3 summarizes differences in beliefs related to school inclusion.

Table 3. Differences in students' beliefs about classroom inclusion based on Unified Sports participation[3]

Beliefs	Participants in Unified Sports	Secondary Participants
Having students with ID in the class helps other students be more accepting of diversity	80%	69%
Students with ID contribute to the class	78%	65%
Students with ID learn more by being in the class	78%	70%
Students with ID benefit socially from being in the class	81%	79%
Students with ID learn from seeing what other students do	86%	83%
Students benefit socially from having students with ID in the class	71%	59%
Students learn things from students with ID	77%	65%
Having students with ID in the class creates a lot of problems	23%	34%
Having students with ID in the class takes too much of the teacher's time	30%	41%
Students don't learn as much when students with ID are in the class	26%	33%

Qualitative findings from the Project UNIFY evaluation, especially Year 5 (2012-2013), also support the efficacy of Unified Sports in promoting positive peer interactions. The CSDE evaluation team conducted interviews related to Unified Sports among parents of students with ID, teachers, and students with and without ID. The following excerpts from these interviews were selected because of their relevance to Unified Sports. Among parents and students, the social opportunities provided by Unified Sports were among the most valuable benefits (See Table 4).

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[3] These data are from the Year 5 Project UNIFY evaluation. Yes and Probably Yes responses were merged. No and probably no responses were merged.

Table 4. Social opportunities provided by Unified Sports

> *"I get to actually talk to people that are on the team."* –student
> *"I can tell you this, there aren't really many opportunities at all for her to leave and have a fun day like that, and be with peers, whether Unified friends or other special needs peers. It doesn't happen at all. … I think, something like this, to look forward to, having a feeling of activity of her own, friends of her own, that sort of thing, there's no question in my mind that that's a positive experience."* –parent
> *"Well, I think he made new friendships, you know, he met new kids. I was there, but I kind of watched, but he didn't need to come to me for anything. If he needed help, he had these kids that were there to kind of help him out with whatever he needed."* –parent

Unified Sports provides an opportunity for interaction with students without disabilities. Parents of students with disabilities recognized the importance of inclusive activities for their children and valued the opportunities Unified Sports provided toward this end.

Table 5. Opportunities for social inclusion provided by Unified Sports

> *"It gave him a chance to interact with kids who don't have disabilities, which is what he wanted. He wants to do everything he sees them do. … It gave my son a chance to socialize with kids who don't have disability. It's definitely a good experience."* –parent
> *"He knows more kids, he feels more included. And that's the whole goal – to feel more like one of them."* –parent
> *"I like Unified because I like the fact that we have special needs and regular kids together because I like making new friends."* –student

Another key benefit of Unified Sports mentioned by both parents and students was the opportunity to play sports (See Table 6). A number of parents noted that their children enjoyed playing sports but likely would not be able to play on school varsity teams. Thus, the opportunity offered by Unified Sports was unique; students would not be able to play sports if not for the existence of Unified teams.

Table 6. Athletic opportunities provided by Unified Sports

> *"The kids in the life skills from all of the schools that love to play basketball and probably wouldn't make it on a JV or varsity team. They have the Unified basketball…. It's good."* –parent
> *"It kind of gives me an opportunity to do something otherwise I wouldn't be in physical shape."* – student
> *"Because unfortunately, we don't quite fit the mold, we're not quite ready for the varsity team, but he is capable with being able to play. So for the kids who fall in the middle … there wouldn't be a chance for him to be able to play."* –parent
> *"My doctor told me I need to lose weight, and this is perfect."* –student

Students, parents, and teachers in the schools visited seemed to be in agreement that participating in

Unified Sports provided personal benefits for the students with disabilities—in the way they viewed themselves and the ways in which they related to others. One such benefit was the feeling of being part of a team, especially a team that provided support and acceptance (see Table 7).

Table 7. Learning to be part of a team through participation in Unified Sports

"It really provides them with the opportunity to have a team—a great team experience with positive reinforcement. I look at the kids that are on the team, and what it does for their morale, and it's huge. That, you can't put a price tag on." –parent
"[I've learned] how to be a good teammate, and how to work together as a team." –student
"I've definitely learned how to be a team player. I never played sports so I wanted to try and get into something like this." –student
"I like the teammates, they always support, if you mess up by mistake, nobody cares because they help you out." –student

In summary, evaluation of Unified Sports programming in school settings elucidates several important outcomes from participation. Students with and without disabilities interact more often through Unified Sports participation. They interact in more diverse ways and settings through Unified Sports participation (i.e., in school hallways, through texting). Unified Sports participation is also associated with improved perceptions of inclusive education. Not only do students of all abilities interact more, but students without disabilities see the value of including students with disabilities in their school.
These findings create implications for practice among teachers, coaches, and school administrators. Overall, they demonstrate the power of sport in school settings to modify students' socially inclusive attitudes and behavior. As administrators seek to build more welcoming and accepting school climates, inclusive sports are thus an important component to include. Among coaches, these findings reflect the need to be aware of, and potentially focus on, both social development and sports skills development outcomes among Unified participants. Finally, these findings also reflect relatively strong socially inclusive attitudes and behaviors, even among students who do not directly participate in Unified Sports. Consequently, teachers and administrators can potentially expect positive school-wide cultural changes from this intervention, even when only a sub-population of students participate directly.

Future Research Needs and Strategies

There is a wealth of evidence about the effectiveness of Unified Sports available through previous studies and secondary data analyses. Gaps still exist, however, in the knowledge base. Future research and evaluation efforts should address these gaps in order to document program outcomes, respond to stakeholder needs/concerns, and improve overall program quality.

One significant gap in the existing evidence base is the limited perspectives of students with ID. In the secondary data analysis, for example, 69 students who participate in special education were identified. This number made meaningful statistical analysis of their responses difficult. Comparisons between students with and without disabilities in the same schools would shed light on whether perspectives about inclusion are consistent between the two groups. Given the challenges in reaching this population

through quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews and/or focus groups could also be useful to learn more from their perspectives. Longitudinal data would also help SO understand the long-term impact of the program, both for participants with and without ID. For example, do students with ID who participate in Unified Sports grow up to live and work in more inclusive settings? Is there a relationship between Unified Sports participation and employment participation over time? While existing evaluation work has included the parents of participants with ID, SO has not incorporated the perspectives of other parents. Particularly in school-based settings, future evaluation work should include quantitative or qualitative data from all parents, including those whose children do not have ID.

Another limited perspective in existing literature is that of Unified Sports coaches. Within program implementation, coaches set standards of team inclusiveness. Future research should identify best practices in coach recruitment and retention. Training needs and development should be assessed. The process of converting Unified Sports participants into quality coaches should be documented and shared. Best practices in the long-term retention of participants and coaches could also improve program quality. Findings from this analysis show that Unified Sports participants tend to interact more often and in more ways with students with disabilities than those who do not participate (see Table 2). Future research should assess the intensity or difficulty of students' interactions and whether Unified Sports participation leads to students engaging in interactions with higher degrees of difficulty. For example, are Unified Sports participants more likely to spend time with students with disabilities outside of school, which is a higher degree of difficulty than simply saying hello in the hallway?

Existing research also tends to focus exclusively on personal and social development outcomes from Unified Sports, e.g., social inclusion, social capital, self-esteem inclusive education, behavior management. As the fastest growing sports program in an international sports organization, future Unified Sports research and evaluation projects should also assess the program's impact on sports skills, health, and/or physical activity levels. Key program stakeholders should identify outcomes within the health domain that Unified Sports could potentially influence and begin capturing relevant metrics for individuals with and without ID. SO could then develop stronger branding, advocacy, and fundraising strategies that tout the program's social *and* health benefits.

Future investment in Unified Sports research and evaluation should also assess impact across different settings. Given that Unified Sports programs are often implemented in schools, it would be useful to compare common indicators across different implementation settings and with different age groups. Comparisons across integrated and segregated schools would also be useful. It would be helpful to understand whether implementation in school vs. community settings delivers the same quality and outcomes and/or whether different core inputs are necessary based on implementation setting. As previously mentioned, SO values an ecological systems theory approach across its programs. To this end, Unified Sports research and evaluation efforts should assess environmental and/or contextual factors that influence program implementation and efficacy. Rather than exclusively focusing on individual behavior change, which factors at the family, school, or community level influence Unified Sports outcomes? Are there attributes of schools or policies within the community that predict important process and outcome indicators? Which attributes contribute to success? Are there barriers in the social

environment that hinder success? And what is the nature of these barriers (e.g., attitudinal, economic, physical)?

Finally, SO could tailor future Unified Sports research to address policy goals in the task environment. For example, recent guidance from the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights requires public schools to create equal access to extracurricular athletic programs for students with disabilities. The Department's guidance urges schools to collaborate with community organizations to meet this requirement. SO and Unified Sports can help schools achieve this equity of access. Moreover, SO has already helped schools through state and district level interscholastic sports partnerships. Evaluations of school and interscholastic sports partnerships could help scale up similar partnerships in schools around the country. Similarly, as Project UNIFY evaluation activities focus on urban schools (see Year 6 evaluation report), SO should also assess the specific impact of Unified Sports programming in these schools. For schools identified as "*in need of improvement*" under No Child Left Behind Act standards, how do Unified Sports students compare with non-participants in terms of self-esteem, perceptions about inclusion, and/or academic achievement? Can Unified Sports address the problem of disproportionality in special education in lower performing schools? Are there contextual factors in these lower performing schools that help or hinder Unified Sports implementation and outcomes? Policies related to education, social inclusion, and access to sports are culturally specific and vary across the many different contexts in which Unified Sports programs operate. Relevant country and community level policies should thus be considered across programs.

Strategies to address these identified gaps should balance existing data collection activities with investment in new studies. The scope and rigor of any new study, of course, hinges on the availability of resources. A tightly controlled, methodologically rigorous study is expensive. Should resources permit, it would be ideal to implement a study with a true experimental design, including a control group of individuals who did not participate in Unified Sports to compare with those who did participate across both social and health indicators. A control group would be especially valuable given the high baselines for student interactions found within the above data (see Table 2). For example, it is somewhat surprising that 81% of students who did not participate in Unified Sports reported they said hello to a student with ID in the hallway and more than half reported talking to a student with ID during free time at school. Since the comparison group is comprised of students who attend a school influenced by Project UNIFY, these interactions may reflect the school-wide impact of the program, even for students not involved directly. Ideally, SO would compare a Unified Sports school with a school not involved at all with Special Olympics or Project UNIFY. This comparison would enable SO to better understand the distinct value and impact of Unified Sports. Furthermore, given the small sample sizes of many existing studies, studies with budgets to accommodate larger sample sizes would be useful. Future research and evaluation initiatives should also include people with ID in study design, data collection, and dissemination.

Given the expenses associated with implementing new studies, SO should also consider how to use existing resources to collect more valuable information about Unified Sports implementation and effectiveness. More feedback from coaches, parents, and participants with and without ID would bolster knowledge about Unified Sports efficacy. McConkey, Dowling, Hassan, and Menke (2013) created

qualitative interview protocols for Unified Sports participants, coaches, parents, and community stakeholders. Although created for participants in a European cultural context, these questions could be adapted and/or translated for Unified Sports programs in other parts of the world.

Within the existing Project UNIFY student survey, SO could also weave relevant health questions in for students who participated in Unified Sports. A small sub-scale of questions related to changes in physical activity, sports skills, and/or health would be a cost effective way to complement the evaluation's focus on social development. Also within the Project UNIFY evaluation, questions related to where student interactions occur (see Table 2) could be adapted for use in community settings. Finally, the Project UNIFY sub-scale related to personal growth and development could be adapted for other settings. This scale has numerous questions that are not specific to school settings and could yield valuable information in other contexts (e.g., As a result of participation...Did you try doing new things? Did you try a new way of acting around people? Did you learn things you have in common with people from different backgrounds? Did you learn to stand up for something you believed was right?) A combination of new studies and improved data collection through existing measures will help close gaps in the evidence base and steer decision-making about future investments in Unified Sports expansion and evaluation.

Measuring Social Inclusion across Special Olympics Programs

Unified Sports as a program and SO as an organization are not alone in their desire to define and measure improvement in social inclusion for people with disabilities. Social inclusion is a guiding principle that underpins disability policy and program development both in the United States and internationally. In the United States, deinstitutionalization in the 1970s led disability advocates to assess and demand greater social inclusion (Braddock and Parish, 2001). The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Olmstead Decision both pushed the right to full social inclusion and participation for people with disabilities to the forefront. Similarly, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities calls for the right to full inclusion in society and community life.

SO is currently in the process of defining a research agenda for Unified Sports and attempting to create cross-program metrics for social inclusion. Consequently, it is essential to contextualize these activities with current thinking about social inclusion measurement from the broader disability community. Amado, Stancliffe, McCarron and McCallion (2013) noted that there has been great investment in measuring social inclusion among young people in education settings. The field has struggled, however, to define inclusion consistently in community settings among people of all ages. Consequently, there is no one-size-fits-all metric for inclusion that currently exists and is relevant for all ages and environments. Amado et al. explain that the disability community typically measures inclusion differently in different settings based on how the term is operationalized. Studies that measure quality of life for people with disabilities tend to fall into one of four categories: 1) measurement of the degree of integration/inclusion/ and participation; 2) friendship and loneliness; 3) factors that affect the degree of social inclusion; and 4) intervention studies that assess the efficacy of different methods to increase inclusion (Amado et al.).

Some work has already taken place within SO to explore the development of a social inclusion scale for specific programs. SO Project UNIFY and the National School Climate Center (NSCC) implemented a one-

year pilot research project to develop, refine and integrate a social inclusion scale into the NCSS Comprehensive School Climate Inventory. The pilot research project engaged 12 Project UNIFY schools and 12 non-project UNIFY schools to shed light on social inclusion as an essential element of a positive school climate. As a result of the pilot, a high-quality social inclusion scale was developed and has been found useful for schools to measure and improve their school climate. At the same time, a Characteristics of Socially Inclusive (CSIS) Rubric was developed to assist schools to self-assess social inclusiveness in their school, and implement strategies to continuously improve the corresponding climate. While this project offers an excellent framework for inclusion in schools, and could serve as a tool to assist in the creation of an organization-wide measure of social inclusion, it is not a framework to define and measure inclusion across all SO programming.

As SO seeks to measure social inclusion in Unified Sports and across programs, the organization needs to define social inclusion both conceptually and operationally. Inclusion can be operationalized based on how frequently people with ID gain access to certain aspects of community of life. Other measures of inclusion focus on choices people with disabilities are able to make and the intensity of their involvement in community life. A review of how other organizations and nations have defined and operationalized social inclusion could be helpful to SO in this process. For example, the Council on Quality and Leadership provides outcome measures on social capital. The Intellectual Disability Supplement to the Irish Longitudinal Study on Aging includes questions related to community inclusion and participation. Australia also implemented a (2010) study measuring the social inclusion of its disabled citizens. Other disability organizations (e.g., SightSavers) have used the community-based rehabilitation matrix to measure social inclusion. Metrics related to social inclusion from the mental health field could also be helpful to review in the process of defining and operationalizing social inclusion for SO.

As SO moves forward with defining social inclusion across its programs, Amado et al. identified four priority research questions for the broader disability field as follows: 1) What are the community members' perspectives about inclusion and what works? 2) How do we bring what works up to scale? 3) What is the conceptual framework for understanding the many different aspects of social inclusion? And 4) How do we address social inclusion for people living with their families? (pp. 367-370). These questions and more SO-specific questions should shape future research and evaluation investments in Unified Sports and other SO interventions.

Section II: Unified Sports player survey and coach interviews

Methods

Program Selection

ESPN supports Unified Sports expansion by funding grants to Special Olympics (SO) Programs to help promote Unified Sports in different countries and U.S. states around the world. In 2014, 13 grants were provided to four U.S. states and nine countries to grow Unified Sports in their Program. Among the Program grantees, participants for this project were selected based on interest in participation, capacity to execute the evaluation within the given timeframe, and international representation from all ESPN market Program regions. [4] This was determined through in-person conversations at the Global Unified Sports Advisory Group (GUSAG) meeting, as well as email exchanges in the following weeks for information gathered at GUSAG. Based on these results, nine Programs participated in this evaluation: North Carolina, Southern California, Florida, Washington, Mexico, Brazil, India, Indonesia, and China. A subset of Programs who participated in the player survey was selected to participate in the coach interviews. Two U.S. Programs, Southern California and Florida, were chosen based on their capacity to conduct interviews in English and their large number of player survey responses.

Advisory Group

Throughout this project, Special Olympics International (SOI) collaborated with a group of experts in research on Unified Sports and Project UNIFY. This Unified Sports Research Advisory Group was comprised of Roy McConkey, Sabine Menke, Janelle Nanavati, Terry Pickeral, and Maurice Elias. The advisory group participated in calls every other month to provide feedback and guidance on Unified Sports evaluation activities. Discussions focused on the creation of the Unified Sports player and coach surveys, strategies for implementation, opportunities for data analysis, and other research activities (e.g. the Unified Sports in U.S. School Settings report).

Instruments

The player survey tool was developed based on the project's first three priority questions. The survey was designed utilizing 1) a survey question bank created by students from Brigham Young University specifically for SO Unified Sports athletes and partners 2) questions from past Unified Sports and Project UNIFY evaluations 3) input from the Unified Sports Research Advisory Group and Unified Sports staff and 4) input from local Programs and Regions.

Prior to this evaluation, Special Olympics' Research & Evaluation and Unified Sports staff collaborated with graduate students at Brigham Young University to create a survey question bank focusing on social

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[4] Because the entire region of Africa was provided with a grant, no Programs were selected to participate in this evaluation. Instead, a presentation was given to Program leaders in Johannesburg in March of 2015 and opportunities to participate in future evaluations were discussed.

inclusion among Unified Sports players and in the broader community. The player survey drew from this question bank and added questions to reflect the two additional areas of interest: physical fitness and sports participation. A review of other Unified Sports evaluation tools was conducted and additional relevant questions were added from these tools. Once complete, a draft was shared with the Unified Sports Research Advisory Group and Unified Sports staff. Changes were made according to comments from both parties, including the creation of a long and a short version of the survey (Appendix A and B). Finally, the surveys were shared with the local Program leads responsible for conducting the survey in their Program. These leads provided feedback on the relevance of the survey questions to ensure that the questions would be understood in all contexts.

Once the player survey was finalized, it was uploaded into Special Olympics' survey system, Qualtrics, and was translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, and Chinese. The translation was first completed through Qualtrics' translation service, and was then sent back to the local Program to confirm its accuracy based on the local context and Special Olympics terminology. Several Programs noted edits to the document, which were then incorporated into the final version of the survey.

The survey was presented to Programs both through an online link as well as a paper version. As mentioned above, two versions of this instrument were created, a long and short version. The short version had fewer questions for the player and did not contain the component of the survey that was to be completed by volunteers who were administering the survey. This survey was designed for Programs who did not have the capacity to execute the long survey, were anticipating large response rates but using paper surveys (thus requiring large amounts of data entry for the Program), or were implementing the recreational model of Unified Sports (making many of the friendship questions irrelevant). SO Bharat, SO North Carolina, and SO Indonesia completed the shorter version of the survey, while the remaining Programs implemented the longer version.

The Unified Sports coach interview questionnaire was created based on a combination of questions from the Unified Sports player survey and from the coach questionnaires created by the University of Ulster. Similar to the player survey, this questionnaire was discussed with Unified Sports staff and the Unified Sports Research Advisory Group. Several edits were made to the tool to reflect the input of these groups, including the elimination of the majority of background questions. This was due to the small number of participants and ultimately allowed for a more rich discussion of best practices, success stories, and challenges (See Appendix C for the final questionnaire).

Procedures

Prior to implementation of the player survey, a FAQ document was sent to Programs to detail the options they have for implementing the survey (see Appendix D). Programs were given the option to have participants fill out the survey in person (either on paper or electronically) or to send it out through email. All Programs chose the in-person option, feeling that sending the survey through email would not provide strong response rates. Additionally, Programs could choose to implement the survey at practices, competitions, or other venues (such as during class time at school). Each of these options were utilized by

different Programs.

Finally, Programs had the choice between conducting the survey on paper (and subsequently entering the data into Qualtrics) or electronically using tablets and offline surveys. These tools were piloted for the first time during this evaluation. To inform Programs on these tools, instructions were sent out to Programs on how to set up and use the tablet and offline survey app (powered by Qualtrics) (Appendix E). The offline survey app allowed Programs to download the survey onto their tablet, administer survey results offline, then upload those results once they reconnected to Wi-Fi. This allowed Programs with a low capacity for data entry and low Internet connectivity to gather more survey results with ease. Several Programs utilized this feature, including Washington, Southern California, North Carolina, Mexico, and Bharat.

Another aspect of implementation was the use of volunteers to execute the survey. The survey was designed such that a volunteer could assist a participant, or the participant could complete it independently. For the longer version of the survey, volunteers were asked to fill out information about the experience (whether they assisted or not, any challenges, etc.). Volunteers allowed Programs to survey multiple athletes and partners at once, a necessity to gather the needed number of surveys. Volunteers also provided one-on-one support to those athletes who needed assistance in filling out the survey. In order to improve the data collection process, volunteer FAQ sheets were created to guide volunteers in implementing the long and short survey (Appendix F and G). Volunteers were instructed to inform players that their participation was voluntary and that they could choose to not answer any question.

Meanwhile, the coach interview questionnaire was executed using phone interviews. Through conversations with internal stakeholders and the Unified Sports Research Advisory Group, this format was selected as the best method to gather information, as this would allow for more exploratory conversation. A staff member of the SOI's Research and Evaluation Department reached out to the Program contact in SO Florida and SO Southern California regarding the survey. Subsequently, the Program contacts emailed coaches, directing them to email SOI if they were interested in participating in the interviews. The phone interviews were recorded and at the beginning of the interview the coach was alerted that they were being recorded and that all questions were voluntary. Following the completion of the interviews the responses to questions were transcribed and themes were then identified relating to benefits to athletes and partners, best practices, and social inclusion.

In the following sections results are provided on both the player survey as well as the coach interviews. Discussions based on these results follows, including potential future research opportunities.

Unified Sports player survey

Results
In total, 963 surveys were completed using tablets and the offline app, while another 752 completed the survey on paper and uploaded their responses online.

Survey Responses by Program

Special Olympics received 1,715 responses to its Unified Sports Player Survey from across 9 Programs. Three countries responded only to the first nine questions of the survey (n=934), and six countries completed the longer 20-question survey (n=781). Bharat contributed the majority of the survey responses (n=592), followed by Indonesia (n=326) and Southern California (n=246). There were 479 respondents from the United States and 1,236 responses from outside the United States. Table 8 and Figure One depict the frequencies and percentages of responses by SO Program.

Table 8. Survey Responses by SO Program

SO Program	N	%
Bharat	592	34.5
Brazil*	56	3.3
China*	198	11.5
Florida*	128	7.5
Indonesia	326	19
Mexico*	64	3.7
North Carolina	16	.9
Southern California*	246	14.3
Washington*	89	5.2

Respondents completed the longer survey.

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Figure 1. Percentages of Total Survey Responses by SO Program
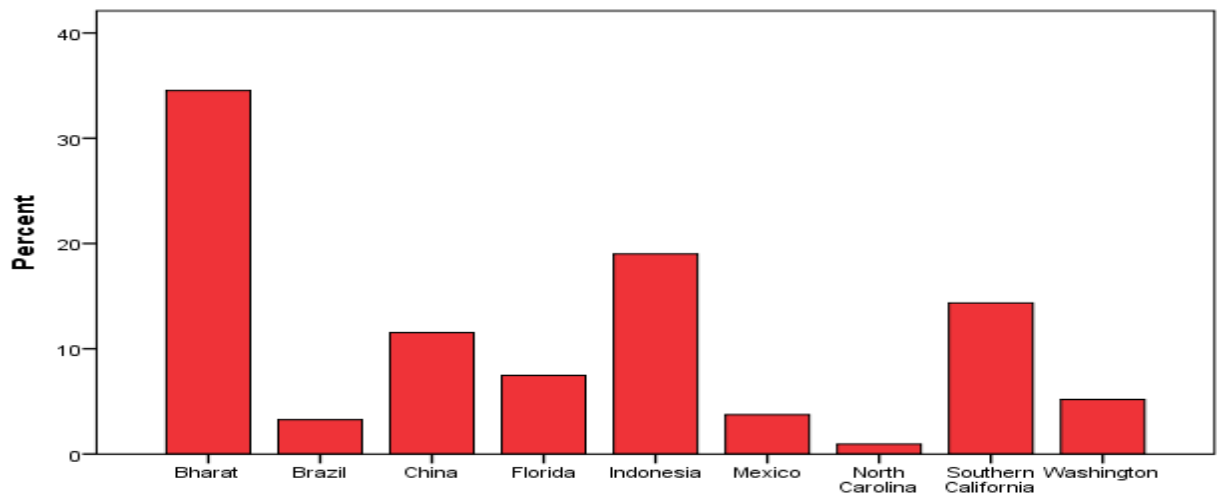
Sample Characteristics

In order to build knowledge about the type of people who participate in Unified Sports around the world, Special Olympics included basic demographic questions in the Player Survey. Approximately half of the respondents reported having an intellectual disability (ID) (n=869), and 44% reported they did not have ID. Among those who identified as having ID, the majority were male (n=598) as opposed to female (n=263). The disparity in responses between males and females could possibly reflect the higher prevalence of ID among males in the general population (Emerson and Hatton, 2014). Overall, among all respondents with and without ID, more males (63%) than females (36%) completed the survey.

The majority of survey respondents (82%) were 24 years of age and younger. The skew toward younger players could possibly reflect greater survey participation among school-based Unified Sports programs, as opposed to community-based. The vast majority of respondents (82%) also reported living at home with parents or relatives. Among the broader population of people with ID, 57.7% live at home with family (Bershadsky et al., 2012). The slightly higher percentage of survey respondents who reported living at home could be related to the relative youth of the sub-population that responded to the survey. Table 9 summarizes the background characteristics of the 1,719 Unified Sports players from around the world who completed the survey. Within Appendix H, Table 29 and Table 30 summarize this same background information stratified by people who reported having ID and people who reported not having ID.

Table 9. Characteristics of the Sample (n=1,715)

Variable	N	%
Years in Unified Sports		
Less than one year	891	51.8
1-2 years	392	22.8
3-4 years	177	10.3

5+ years	132	7.7
Don't Know	87	5.1
Don't Understand	13	0.8
Missing	27	1.6
Intellectual Disability?		
Yes	869	50.6
No	762	44.3
Don't Understand	52	3.0
Missing	36	2.1
Age		
Under 12	58	3.4
12-18	940	54.7
19-24	416	24.2
25-34	161	9.4
35-44	68	4.0
45-54	34	2.0
55+	8	0.5
Don't Understand	11	0.6
Missing	23	1.3
Gender		
Male	1,082	62.9
Female	610	35.5
Don't Understand	9	0.5
Missing	18	1.0
Living Situation		
On my own	117	6.8
With parents/relatives	1,416	82.4
Shared house/apartment	38	2.2
Group home	64	3.7
Other	61	3.5
Don't understand	2	0.1
Missing	21	1.2
Employment Status		
Paid more than 20 hours	161	9.4
Paid less than 20 hours	110	6.4
Not working, looking	134	7.8
Not working, not looking	122	7.1
Full-time student	1,023	59.5
Retired	13	0.8
Unable to work	79	4.6
Don't understand	45	2.6

Missing	32	1.9
Role in Unified Sports		
Athlete	927	53.9
Partner	713	41.5
Don't understand	51	3.0
Missing	28	1.6

Athlete vs. Partner Terminology

Within Unified Sports programs, participants with ID are identified as "athletes" and those without disabilities are identified as "partners." The Player Survey asked respondents whether they had ID in question #2. Question #7 then asks whether respondents are "athletes" or "partners" in the context of Unified Sports. Among those who answered the question, **116 respondents** identified themselves incorrectly. For example, 43 people reported they had ID and were a Unified Sports "partner;" 74 respondents stated they did not have ID and were a Unified Sports "athlete." In total, people who mis-identified themselves represented 6% of those who answered the questions (n=1,665). Southern California had the highest number of respondents who mis-identified themselves (n=47), followed by Bharat (n=25) and Indonesia (n=17).

Previous Contacts with People with ID

Among Unified Sports "partners," or players without ID, 62% reported that they had met and talked with people with ID before playing Unified Sports, compared with 28% who reported they had not met or talked with people with ID prior to joining. Respondents from the United States were more likely to report that they had met or talked with people with ID before Unified Sports (77.1% compared with 56.2%). The nature of the contacts among those who reported previous exposure to people with ID is described in Table 10. The most common response noted for this question was having a friend with ID before joining Unified Sports. People reporting attending school with people with ID was the second most frequent reply. Respondents from the United States were more likely to report attending school with people with ID than those outside of the United States (75.1% compared with 48.4%).

Table 10. Contacts with People with ID before SO Unified Sports*

Type of Contact	Yes	No	Don't Understand
Caregiver/parent of a person with ID	18% (108)	78.5% (472)	3.5% (21)
Sibling of a person with ID	15.2% (90)	81.1% (482)	3.7% (22)
Family member (not a sibling or child) with ID	20.6% (123)	75.3% (450)	4.2% (25)
Family member with ID on Unified Sports Team	15.7% (92)	81.8% (480)	2.6% (15)

	Agree/Strongly Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Work with people with ID	37.5% (223)	59.8% (356)	2.7% (16)
Volunteered with SO in the past	43.8%(254)	53.8% (312)	2.4% (14)
Had friends with ID before Unified Sports	63.8% (384)	33.1% (199)	3.2% (19)
Went/Go to school with people with ID	59.5% (351)	38.1% (225)	2.4% (14)
Other contacts	56.1% (312)	39% (217)	4.9% (27)

Only Unified Sports partners, or players without disabilities, responded to this question. Percentages exclude missing cases.

Results from Unified Sports Participation

The vast majority of Player Survey respondents reported positive results from their experiences with Unified Sports. Reported results were positive both for sport/health-focused outcomes and social development/inclusion outcomes. Overall, 94.5% of survey respondents indicated they plan to play Unified Sports again. With respect to sports and health, 93.7% of respondents reported feeling healthier as a result of Unified Sports, and 91% indicated that their sports skills improved. Since playing Unified Sports, 67% reported exercising at least once a week as part of Unified, and 74% reported exercising at least once a week outside of Unified Sports. With respect to friendship and social inclusion, 89.4% indicated they feel more comfortable talking to people with ID as a result of Unified Sports, and 90.5% reported they have more friends with ID. Results when comparing responses from people with and without ID were similar. For a few questions, there were slight differences between people with and without ID. People with ID were slightly more likely than people without ID to report their sports skills improved from playing Unified Sports (94.1% compared with 87.9%). People with ID were also more likely to report they exercise more every week as a result of Unified Sports (89.6% compared with 80.6%). Finally, people with ID were slightly more likely to report having more friends without ID as a result of Unified Sports participation (86.8% compared with 80.1%). Tables 11 and 12 summarize respondents' reported results from Unified Sports participation.

Table 11. Results from Unified Sports Participation*

Results	Agree/Strongly Agree	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Don't Understand
More comfortable talking	89.4% (1,413)	4.4% (70)	4.2% (67)	1.9% (30)

to people with ID				
More comfortable talking to people without ID	82.7% (1,295)	9.1% (143)	5.9% (93)	2.2% (35)
Do more activities in my community	83% (1,304)	9.3 (146)	5.1% (80)	2.7% (42)
Feel healthier	93.7% (1,475)	3% (48)	1.5% (24)	1.8% (28)
Sports skills improved	90.9% (1,411)	5.5% (86)	2.1% (33)	1.4% (22)
Joined another team outside of Unified Sports	67.7% (911)	23.9% (321)	6% (81)	2.4% (32)
Exercise more every week	85.2% (1,349)	10.7% (170)	2.6% (41)	1.5% (23)
Have more friends with ID	90.5% (1,417)	5.8% (91)	2% (32)	1.7% (26)
Have more friends without ID	82.7% (1,287)	11.9% (185)	2.9% (45)	2.5% (39)
Plan to play Unified again	94.5% (1,496)	2.5% (39)	1.5% (23)	1.6% (25)

**Percentages exclude missing cases. Agree and strongly agree responses are merged. Disagree and strongly disagree responses are merged.*

Table 12. Exercise Habits since Playing Unified Sports*

	Never	Less than once a week	Once a Week	Twice a Week	More than Twice a Week
Exercise/play sports as part of Unified Sports	8.8% (64)	17% (124)	20.5% (150)	20.8% (152)	26.1% (191)
Exercise/play sports outside of Unified Sports	9.6% (69)	10.4% (75)	16.6% (119)	16% (115)	41.5% (298)

Excludes people who did not answer or stated they don't know or don't understand the question.

Friendship and Social Interaction

Of the 781 participants who completed the long survey, 82.7% (n=589) reported that they have at least one friend they like to do things with from their Unified Sports team. When asked whether their closest friend on their Unified Sports team had ID, 60.8% (n=362) answered "Yes," 30.1% (n=179) reported "No," while 7.2% (n=43) responded "I don't know" and 1.8% (n=11) answered "Don't understand question." The high number of missing cases (n = 186) can most likely be explained by the fact that respondents were asked to skip this question if they did not answer "Yes" to question #10.

An interesting association was noted when considering the respondents' self-report on identifying as having ID. More players with ID identified that their closest friend on the team had ID than players without ID. Specifically, of the 304 participants identifying as having ID, approximately 72% (n=219) said

that their closest friend on the Unified Sports team had ID; 20% (n=60) responded that their closest friend did not have ID. Of the 263 respondents who did not identify as having ID, 48% (n=126) reported that their best friend on the team had ID. Approximately 45% (n=118) of the non-ID group responded that their best friend did not have ID.

In terms of gender, there was a difference when considering whether one's closest friend had ID. Approximately 64% (n=226) of the males reported that their friend had ID, while 57% (n=133) of the females described their closest team friend as having ID. Notable differences based on age were not observed. Finally, with respect to overall group social interactions, 65% of respondents reported that their team does activities together outside of training and competition; there were not notable differences based on country.

Table 13 below summarizes the nature of participants' social interactions and activities through Unified Sports. Respondents were most likely to report that they would choose their closest friend as a partner in a game (75.2%) or stand up for him or her if people were being mean (71%). They were least likely to report that they would share a secret with a friend (50.3%) or friend him/her on Facebook (51.2%). There were not notable differences based on whether or not respondents reported having ID. There were several differences when comparing responses from the United States to those outside the United States. People from U.S. Programs were more likely to report that they hang out with their friend outside of Unified Sports (68.4% compared with 53.1%). Respondents from the United States were also more likely to report that they would share a secret with their friend (54.8% compared with 44%), and that they would stand up for their friend if others were being mean (79.9% compared with 58.7%). Respondents from the United States were more likely to report that they would eat a meal with their friend (72.7% compared with 53.1%) and introduce him or her to their other friends (79.3% compared with 66%). Table 13 summarizes responses from all participants.

Table 13. Activities with Closest Friend on Unified Sports Team*

	Yes	Not yet, but would in the future	No	I don't know	Don't understand question
Hang out w/ him/her outside of Unified Sports	62.1% (366)	24.3% (143)	10.4% (61)	2.2% (13)	1.0% (6)
Lend him/her something that belongs to you	56.5% (328)	24.6% (143)	14.3% (83)	3.4% (20)	1.2% (7)
Share a secret w/ him/her	50.3% (289)	23.8% (137)	19.1% (110)	5.9% (34)	.9% (5)
Have him/her over to your house	44.3% (254)	31.2% (179)	20.2% (116)	3.3% (19)	.9% (5)

Stand up for him/her if others are being mean	71.0% (408)	17.4% (100)	7.8% (45)	2.6% (15)	1.2% (7)
Eat a meal w/ him/her outside of Unified	64.4% (369)	22.0% (126)	11.7% (67)	.9% (5)	1.0% (6)
Call him/her on the phone	52.9% (306)	25.1% (145)	18.7% (108)	2.4% 14)	.9%(5)
Text/SMS him/her	56.6% (322)	21.3% (121)	17.6% (100)	3.7% (21)	.9% (5)
Introduce him/her to your other friends	73.6% (419)	16.5% (94)	8.1% (46)	.7% (4)	1.1% (6)
Choose him/her as a partner in a game	75.2% (428)	16.0% (91)	6.5% (37)	.5% (3)	1.8% (10)
Friend him/her on Facebook	51.2% (289)	21.9% (124)	21.6% (122)	3.2% (18)	2.1% (12)
Go together to a community activity	56.2% (324)	27.9%(161)	13.0%(75)	1.4% (8)	1.6% (9)

Percentages exclude missing cases.

Coaching and Training

The Player Survey included questions aimed at building understanding about Unified Sports coaching practices and philosophies. In response to questions about what coaches focused on during training and competitions, 89.6% of respondents reported their coaches focused a lot on working as a team, and 82.2% reported coaches focused a lot on improving sports skills. The least common response was "winning;" 54.6% indicated their coaches focused on winning. Respondents from United States Programs (58%) were more likely to report a coach's focus on winning than respondents from Programs outside the U.S. (49%). Table 14 summarizes coaches' focus areas.

Table 14. Unified Sports Coaches' Focus Areas

Focus Area	A lot	A little	Not at all	Don't Understand
Sports Skills	82.2% (574)	14.3% (100)	1.3% (9)	2.1% (15)
Social Skills	69.5% (456)	25.9% (170)	2% (13)	2.6% (17)

Making new friends	79.5% (551)	16.6% (115)	1.9% (13)	2.0% (14)
Winning	54.6% (363)	34.1% (227)	9.2% (61)	2.1% (14)
Working as a Team	89.6% (635)	7.3% (52)	1.1% (8)	2% (14)
Other	39.4% (65)	37.6% (62)	7.3% (12)	15.8% (26)

The Player Survey also gathered information from respondents about the length of their training seasons and length of each training session. Of those who understood and answered the question, 22.2% indicated their season is more than 10 weeks; 13.4% indicated their season is 7-8 weeks, 13.3% indicated 4-6 weeks, 9.3% indicated 9-10 weeks, 7.2% indicated less than one week, and 5.8% indicated 1-3 weeks. Responses to this question were not consistent within Programs. For example, in Florida, 22 people said their season is 4-6 weeks, 52 said 7-8 weeks, and 18 said 9-10 weeks. In China, the majority of respondents reported that their season is more than ten weeks. With respect to the length of each training session, 27.1% said their sessions are between 60 and 90 minutes; 26.6% said their sessions are between 30 and 60 minutes; 17.7% said their sessions are 90 minutes; and 8.6% said their sessions are less than 30 minutes.

Reasons for Playing

The most common reasons respondents cited for joining Unified Sports were to meet new friends (91.4%), to improve social skills (89.9%), and to improve sports skills (88.6%). Respondents were least likely to report they joined because someone signed them up (45.1%). In assessing differences based on ID status, people without disabilities were more likely to report signing up for Unified Sports to do community service/charity work. People with ID were more likely to report signing up because their friends were playing, because someone else signed them up, or to start playing sports again.

With respect to gender, males were more likely than females to report signing up to play sports with people **without** disabilities. Males also reported more interest in the sports and health related reasons for joining Unified Sports than females. For example, more males than females reported joining to play a new sport or to improve health/fitness. In terms of differences between United States Programs and those outside the United States, respondents from the United States were more likely to report joining Unified in order to start playing sports again. Table 15 summarizes respondents' reasons for joining Unified Sports. Appendix H includes this table broken out by people who reported having ID and those who reported no ID.

Table 15. Reasons for Signing up for Unified Sports*

Reason	Yes	No	Don't Understand
To play sports **with** people with ID	88.3% (586)	8.4% (56)	3.3% (22)
To play sports **without** people with ID	69.7% (459)	27.2% (179)	3.2% (21)
To try a new sport	70.3% (481)	27.2% (186)	2.5% (17)
To start playing sports again	69% (460)	28.6% (191)	2.4% (16)
To improve my health and fitness	86.6% (588)	11.9% (81)	1.5% (10)
To improve my social skills	89.9% (599)	8.4% (56)	1.7% (11)
To improve my sports skills	88.6% (591)	10% (67)	1.3% (9)
To make new friends	91.4% (608)	7.5% (50)	1.1% (7)
To meet people with ID	87.2% (580)	9.3 (62)	3.5 (23)
To meet people without ID	77.9% (514)	18.9 (125)	3.2 (21)
To do community service/charity work	68% (452)	28.1 (187)	3.9 (26)
Because my friends were playing	65.8% (435)	31.9% (211)	2.3% 15)
Because someone else signed me up	45.1% (293)	51.3% (333)	3.5% (23)
Other	60.5% (78)	20.2% (26)	19.4% (25)

Percentages exclude missing cases.

Accessibility of Survey

In general, results from the Player Survey indicate that the vast majority of respondents chose to answer the questions, including people with ID, as opposed to reporting that they did not understand the questions. For most of the survey questions, between 1% and 3% of the respondents reported that they did not understand the question. There were only two questions for which the "don't understand" percentages were higher. First, question #13 (does your team do activities together to have fun and get to know each other?) had a slightly higher percentage of people (4.8%) who reported that they did not understand the question. Only slightly more people with ID (n=14) than without ID (n=9) stated they did not understand. Only slightly more people from United States Programs (n=19) stated they did not

understand, compared with Programs from outside the United States (n=12).

A slightly higher than average percentage of respondents (5.8%) also reported that they did not understand question 16 (how many weeks is your Unified Sports season?). More people with ID (n=28) reported they did not understand this question than those without ID (n=6). More people from Programs outside the United States (n=28) reported they did not understand this question than people from Programs within the United States (n=13).

Limitations and Future Research

The Player Survey represents a cost effective, convenient way for SO Unified Sports Programs to elicit feedback from individual players, who are otherwise hard to reach, from across the globe. Despite numerous advantages, there are limitations to the Player Survey findings that must be considered. One significant limitation of the Player Survey is the possibility that sampling/selection bias influenced its findings. For several questions (e.g., Question 9, Question 12, Question 18), it was difficult to find meaningful differences within responses by gender, age, or country, because the responses were so overwhelmingly positive. The high quality of the programs likely contributed to these positive responses, but SO should also consider that the people who answered may have been biased. People willing to respond to the survey may have been more enthusiastic about Unified Sports than those who did not. Survey administrators were unable to seek responses from people who decided to leave the program. Their feedback may have been less positive or more critical than those who stayed engaged with Unified Sports. Consequently, the results from the survey cannot be generalized to the broader population of Unified Sports participants.

Another limitation of this survey is the fact that the scales (e.g., Question 9, Question 12, and Question 18) have not been tested for reliability or validity. This lack of testing makes scoring these scales difficult and meaningless because it is not clear if/how to weight the individual elements within the scales. Since the variables within the scales are nominal and ordinal level variables, the types of analyses available are limited. If SO were to invest in creating and validating a social inclusion scale, which could be scored, many new and more meaningful analyses would be possible. It would be possible to look for predictors or correlates of social inclusion, instead of just examining frequencies of responses and basic associations. A first step in this process would be for the organization to define and operationalize the construct of social inclusion in the context of Unified Sports and other SO interventions.

In addition to the development and validation of a social inclusion scale, next steps for this research could include gathering more data from Unified coaches, whose perspectives as key stakeholders are not represented within the present survey. Given the high number of responses from young people in this survey, it might be helpful to seek more information from the perspectives of older adults, especially those who participate in community-based Unified Sports programs. Finally, it would bolster understanding about the perspectives of players with ID if qualitative data collection approaches complemented the quantitative methods. The flexibility afforded through interview or focus group methods could help ensure people understand the questions and have opportunities to express their

thoughts in their own words.

Unified Sports coach interviews

The coach is a key participant in any team. Coaches set the tone of a team and play an integral role in building sports skills, morale, and friendships. The following section details the results and limitations of interviews with Unified Sports coaches in two U.S. Programs. These results provide an additional layer of perspective about the Unified Sports experience and can help provide additional context to the results of the player survey.

Results

In total, eight coaches were interviewed including six coaches from SO Southern California (SOSC) (all from the Los Angeles Unified School District) and two from SO Florida (SOFL). All of the participants coached Unified Sports in a school setting and four of the eight coaches interviewed had coached traditional Special Olympics prior to coaching Unified Sports. Those who had previous Special Olympics experience had coached for an average of three years. Coaches had experience coaching Unified Sports for an average of 2.5 years, with the most experience being 6 years and the least being one half years. Three of the eight were male, and the majority of coaches were between 30 and 49 years old.

When asked what was the most helpful background experience coaches had to inform their experiences as a Unified Sports coach, participants discussed their personal experience as an athlete as well as their training as either a special education teacher or adaptive PE teacher. Many coaches expressed that their sports experience informed their role as a coach and served as a motivation for offering Unified Sports at their school. They wanted their athletes to have the same positive experience they had being part of a team and playing sports at school.

Table 16. Useful background experience for Unified Sports coaches

Experience as an athlete	*"I did participate in sports throughout my high school career… I noticed that my kids weren't very social with the rest of the campus and I want them to have a good high school experience like I did." –* SOSC coach *"Well for me having participated in sports and knowing how awesome it is. It was important to me to have my students have an experience like that that I had personally on my own front." –* SOSC coach *"… I did team sports and basically Unified is team sports and it just shows you how to work together, how to be conscientious of the people around you, how to be the best person on the team." –* SOSC coach *"When I was young I played sports. I played baseball and I played basketball –*

	both at high school… Yeah. I think once you start working with students with special needs you start understanding how maybe lucky or blessed that I've been to been able to play." – SOSC coach
Special education/adaptive PE training	*"Mostly the knowledge base I got in the adaptive PE credential program has helped me the most in doing the teaching and doing the coaching."* – SOSC coach *"Well I have a degree in PE and health so I'm aware of the different sports and the different roles and how to train an athlete to be successful."* – SOFL coach *"Before becoming an adaptive PE teacher I was a respite worker for kids with special needs."* – SOSC coach *"I have had extensive training in behavior in how to positively shape behavior to the way that you want it. I've also been trained in task analysis. So I was able to break the skill down into very small parts to be able to teach each tiny part."* – SOFL coach

Coaches were also asked what they focused on during practices and competitions. Results found that coaches focused most on improving social skills, making new friends, meaningful involvement of all players (athletes *and* partners), and working as a team. Coaches also reported that improving physical fitness and sports skills were important, although less so than the other items. The final category, winning, was given a moderate to low importance by most coaches. These results align with the results from the player survey, in which athletes and partners were much less likely to report that their coach focused on winning (57%) compared to other categories. Other areas that coaches reported focusing on for their team included helping students understand how to win and lose, whole school engagement, social relationships outside of Unified Sports, improving self-esteem, and communication.

Benefits for athletes

When asked about the biggest benefits of participating in Unified Sports for athletes, several coaches mentioned improved confidence and communication. Coaches shared stories about students who they had seen improve as a result of participating in Unified Sports. One coach reported that participating in Unified Sports had helped a few nonverbal students begin speaking.

Table 17. Athletes improved communication and confidence

"I also have another student that walked on his tippy toes and put his hoodie over his head and looked at his feet the whole time he walked so if you walked next to him you'd never know. From last year to this year he is walking more normal and his head is not down anymore. His head is up, he's looking around, he's more aware, he's happier, he's actually becoming more confident around the rest of campus walking around." – SOSC coach *"And now that we've brought in kids from the general ed PE classes they now know them and our kids*

> *have…their social skills have improved and it has given them confidence. Even the kids that are nonverbal, they initiate some type of communication."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"I focus on cooperative learning and communication. Mostly communication, so verbal and nonverbal. A lot of my kids are nonverbal so teaching my partners sign language and teaching my athletes how to communicate their wants, needs, and yelling for the ball or strategy-wise communicating with the partners."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"The Unified Sports program has helped Victor, which is one of the students. The doctor had recommended for him to be more involved in physical activity because he was pretty stiff as far as his movements … him playing basketball in a Unified basketball tournament has really helped him physically because he moves a lot more, and also cognitively it has helped him also in his academics. And he has been able to improve his communication skills. Before he would not really talk, but now after participating in the basketball, in the Special Olympics Unified basketball team he has been communicating a lot more in full sentences… [His teacher] said that it has nothing to do with her as a teacher because she said she has had him since ninth grade and she has just seen that improvement now that he's a senior. And she said it's not her, it's because of the Unified basketball team."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"And then two or three of my nonverbal students who are voluntarily mute have decided to talk. They want to talk; they want to communicate with the partners."* – SOSC coach

Several coaches commented on how students were secluded in their school community prior to Unified Sports and that was an impetus for creating a Unified Sports program at their school. They noted that athletes benefitted by becoming more engaged and included in the school community. Several coaches remarked that Unified Sports made their students with ID more visible on campus and made other students more likely to interact with them, even those who had not participated in Unified Sports.

Table 18. Integration in school community through Unified Sports

	"We were just there in the school and nobody really knew about the adapted PE program. Or they saw them there but they didn't really communicate with them. They were never social with them." – SOSC coach
Need for more integration in community	*"My students needed something else to do beside just my class. They needed to be involved with the rest of the school campus."* – SOSC coach
	"Well basically most of my kids, meaning my students… would just go home and sit and watch TV and be bored and they were just dying to do something extra." – SOSC coach
	"My students were kind of pushed into the corner before and they've

	become more visible on campus and administration has discovered that this program is actually pretty awesome and they're starting to be more supportive." – SOSC coach
Improved engagement and inclusion in school community	"This gets them so that they have kids when they're walking down the hallway to say hi to. It's not only students from their class it's students all over school are like, "Hey! How's it going?" and eating lunch together and coming finding them in PE and stuff like that." – SOSC coach "And even the TAs, teacher assistants, say that the kids see each other in the hall and they go up to each other and say hey you know, 'give me five' or 'nice game'. They'll say hi to each other and recognize each other. So that's really nice for the kids. For all the kids – general ed as well as special ed – just to feel part of the community." – SOSC coach "As far as my kids, the athletes, go they feel like they're now a part of the school… You know for instance the baseball team on our campus on game days they wear their jersey on campus, the football team they wear their jerseys on campus and my kids see that. You know they have elective classes with these kids and so Unified has given them their athletic venue so to speak, so they feel that they're just as worthy as those kids." – SOSC coach

Coaches also expressed that athletes learning how to be on a team and enjoying that experience was a tremendous benefit.

Table 19. Athletes learn to be on a team

"And we had one reflection where a student said, 'I liked going to the Unified Sports soccer game. It was my first time being a part of a team.'" – SOSC coach "Skill acquisition and interacting in a learned meaningful experience socially is probably the biggest thing. So, it doesn't have to be making friends but definitely learning in a group setting because that's a big part of high school curriculum…a lot of them haven't experienced that and so having the modified equipment, having the accommodations in place makes that difference…. So when I have an athlete that's learning a skill, and it's new to them, but it's also in a group setting which is new to them – both of those things are taking place because of Unified Sports." – SOSC coach "[The biggest benefit was] the opportunity to be part of a team. And then just having the experience of going out and competing with kids of their age level and kids who do not have intellectual disability." – SOSC coach "So, it was pretty good, especially since they became guys that could not only compete together, but learn together, and actually put a hand on the other and say good job and stuff, that was a big deal."

– SOSC coach

Finally, coaches discussed how Unified Sports has improved attendance and enthusiasm for class.[5]

"I have a couple of kids, autistic, that are very sensitive and you know have a hard time sometimes getting to school. And some of my ID kids that tend to stay home a lot, but during season they're here every day. They're like, 'What are we doing? Is it basketball season?' OK now we're doing whiffle ball, or softball, 'Is it softball season? Do we get to play against other teams?' 'OK what are we doing Tuesday'… So then they all show up. But if nothing's going on, yeah there's a lot that stay home. So it brings them to school." – SOSC coach *"Most of my students are actually liking to come to class now."* – SOSC coach *"There's a lot of students in adaptive PE now that will have finished their two years and so they won't be required by the state to take PE, but they want to take it as an elective. And a lot of students with disabilities would almost be, without this change of perspective that can take place, would almost be expected to choose any class but PE. And that's just not the case. So it speaks to the program and it speaks to the desire to be part of something that's for everyone."* – SOSC coach

Benefits for partners

The most frequent benefit that coaches cited for partners was that they gained an understanding of diversity. One coach remarked that Unified Sports provided a unique opportunity for partners to engage in dialogue about disability and ask questions, allowing for improved understanding and acceptance. Several coaches noted that this was a skill that would benefit partners well after their high school careers, as they go on to work with different types of individuals, or perhaps even have a child or family member with a disability. With people with disabilities comprising 15% of the global population, Unified Sports provides students without disabilities an opportunity to learn about, understand, interact with, and embrace those that are different from them.[6]

Table 20. Partners improve respect for diversity

"[The biggest benefit for partners is] building an understanding for people who are not like them. Learning compassion, learning patience – skills that they'll need when they leave high school and go to college and then go to work. These are all skills because there are so many different kinds of people in the world and this is giving them a heads up that not everyone's like them but it's ok, and it's ok to interact with everybody and everybody has their good points and everyone has their not so good points, and to pull out the good points in people. And I think that through this it pulls the good points out of the partners and out of the athletes." – SOSC coach

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[5] Note that all coaches interviewed were coaching school-based programs.
[6] World Health Organization. (2011). World report on disability, 2011.

> *"They get an understanding of their peers that are also on this campus that they do not get to interact with because they're not in typical classes. The partners are in their typical English and math so they really don't even know who they are sometimes. And I think that's great for them. You just never know because when they get older they could easily have a child with a disability or they're going to know someone with a disability so they'll be familiar with how to interact and the process that comes with that."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"[They learn] how to be accepting of others. Not seeing them as being someone with a disability, but seeing them as someone just like them and who is out there playing to have a good time."* – SOFL coach
>
> *"Kind of understanding what the different types of disabilities that they have and getting experience within the PE program… They (partners) just see them (athletes) and they see how they are and sometimes they ask me too about their disability. So they're getting knowledge and they're learning about different types of disabilities."* – SOSC coach

In addition to open ended discussions about the benefits of Unified Sports, coaches were also asked about specific changes they may have noticed in their athletes and partners. All coaches noticed changes in communication skills and sports skills among athletes, partners, or both.

Table 21. Coaches observed changes in athletes and partners

Statements	% coaches reporting change in athletes	% coaches reporting change in partners	% coaches reporting change in neither group
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem more comfortable talking to people with an intellectual disability	62.5% (n=5)	100% (n=8)	0% (n=0)
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem more comfortable talking to people without an intellectual disability	100% (n=8)	50% (n=4)	0% (n=0)
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem to do more activities in their community	87.5% (n=7)	75% (n=6)	12.5% (n=1)
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem healthier	87.5% (n=7)	62.5% (n=5)	12.5% (n=1)
Since participating in Unified Sports, their sports skills have improved	100% (n=8)	87.5% (n=7)	0% (n=0)
Since participating in Unified Sports, they joined another sports team outside of Unified Sports (or plan to in the future)	75% (n=6)	50% (n=4)	25% (n=2)
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem to exercise more every week	75% (n=6)	75% (n=6)	25% (n=2)
Since participating in Unified Sports, they	50% (n=4)	75% (n=6)	12.5% (n=1)

seem to have more friends with intellectual disabilities			
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem to have more friends without intellectual disabilities	75% (n=6)	50% (n=4)	12.5% (n=1)

Challenges for coaches

Coaches were asked to share challenges that they faced running their Unified Sports team. Coaches reported challenges with partner recruitment, parent engagement, faculty and administration buy-in, and appropriate divisioning.[7] The most common challenge cited was difficulty recruiting partners when first starting the program.

Table 22. Challenges with partner recruitment

"Kids were like, 'Eh, we don't want to play with them,' whatever. But now, no, now everybody wants to play with them." – SOSC coach

"Recruiting good partners because that's pretty difficult to find. Because sometimes they might show up for the first practice and they might get discouraged." – SOSC coach

"At first getting kids to participate. Once they see it they love it. But I had a couple girls that were really afraid of participating, not only playing basketball but just not really understanding how my students interact. But by the end they are the ones coming back. They're the ones who want to be with my students, it's amazing. It opened their eyes." – SOSC coach

[The biggest challenge was] Getting partners that are willing to participate that want to make a full semester commitment." – SOSC coach

While coaches reported that partners were often difficult to recruit at the outset, this obstacle was overcome by increased awareness of the program and involvement by the school community. Coaches also discussed possible solutions to other challenges, such as divisioning. Several coaches discussed how when the league was comprised of one division their team sometimes became uncompetitive, thereby decreasing the fun and morale of the team. One coach reported that through the creation of a separate league for only students with ID (similar to traditional Special Olympics) and the creation of two Unified Sports divisions, this challenge was mitigated and all students were able to play competitively in a league that matched their ability levels. Throughout the interviews coaches showed creativity and determination in addressing challenges, and each was confident that issues that arise can be addressed.

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[7] The fundamental difference between Special Olympics competitions and those of other sports organizations is that athletes of all ability levels are encouraged to participate, and every athlete is recognized for his/her performance. Thus, divisioning occurs to ensure competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions.

Promoting social inclusion

A primary goal of these interviews was to determine what changes, if any, coaches had seen in the social inclusion of athletes on and off the playing field as well as effective methods they use to promote social inclusion. In line with past evaluations, Unified Sports coaches reported that their athletes had experienced improved social inclusion as a result of the program. Many coaches discussed how athletes and partners not only were friends on the court, but would also spend time together outside of Unified Sports.

Table 23. Friendships outside of Unified Sports

> *"They have a banquet together, a lot of them eat lunch together, by choice on their own, and they also search out - my athletes and partners they search out each other during football games, basketball games..."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"Well actually they've all made friends. When I have either one, athletes or partners, certain ones that don't come to class the other ones are like, 'Well where is he? What's going on? Are they sick? Or are they ill?'"* – SOSC coach
>
> *"Yeah [friendships], they're not just in my class. They're throughout the school day and actually after school. A couple of them have actually met at the park and played basketball together. "* – SOSC coach
>
> *"Well pretty much actually throughout the whole time and after, even to this day, even though [Unified Sports is] over, the students that participated with us in the basketball still come to my class probably once a week and participate. Just participate."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"... I like how they developed a friendship. And I noticed it after we came back from our first event and I saw kids interacting hallways either just saying hi or giving a high five. And normally those kids wouldn't even talk to each other prior to participating with this unified team."* – SOFL coach
>
> *"I don't have to do a lot of encouraging. They just want to be together, which is so cool. And I think it is because they formed that bond on the basketball court."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"...After our county games one of the partners actually she was like, 'Let's all go to laser tag.' So three of the doubles, so six of the kids went to go play laser tag."* – SOFL coach
>
> *"I think that the pairs – the athletes and the partner – I think their relationships grew stronger because they we reworking together on a common goal."* – SOFL coach

Consistent with results from the Unified Sports player survey, coaches have also seen partners become allies for athletes in school to combat bullying.

Table 24. Partners stand up for athletes

> *"And my partners are standing up for athletes when other students at the school are making comments or making fun or whatever. My partners have actually stepped up and said, 'Hey, you know, this student doesn't understand what you're saying and you're making fun of them and that's not cool.'"* – SOSC coach
>
> *"And they kind of also defend our students as far as when it comes to bullying and stuff. Or when they hear a comment or something negative towards our kids – our athletes – they stand up for them. Because they understand what they're about and about their disability."* – SOSC coach

Past evaluations have found that the role of the coach is key in creating an environment within Unified Sports that facilitates social inclusion among athletes and partners (Dowling et al 2010). Interviews revealed that there were several strategies that coaches found helpful to promote these friendships on and off the playing field. Coaches reported that by prioritizing team bonding, they were able to encourage and develop natural friendships.

Table 25. Encouraging team bonding

> *"Well, I think [friendships] comes from prioritizing the team aspect and the getting to know your teammates aspect early on."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"You prioritize the team orientation going on and you keep it going throughout the season, like it builds up. So that would be kind of like the culminating thing at the game is gonna be everybody's gonna be arm and arm at the beginning and at the end and when you're on the bench you're all together and if somebody falls everybody runs to that person –like, it's the team.."* – SOSC coach

Several coaches discussed the use of games as a tool to facilitate this bonding at the beginning of the season. Coaches described games used to familiarize athletes and partners, allowing them to learn each other's names, interests, etc. at the beginning of the season. Athletes and partners were encouraged to take knowledge acquired through introductory games and utilize it outside of Unified Sports. Coaches also encouraged other activities, such as sitting together at lunch. This is consistent with findings from Dowling et al (2010) which found that coaches encouraging interactions outside of Unified Sports was helpful in developing friendships and social inclusion.

Table 26. Getting to know each other inside and outside of Unified Sports

> *"During drills and stuff I try to mix the kids so that the general ed's not just with the general ed, that they partner up with an athlete and get to know each other's name. That's real important. And at the beginning I'll say, 'OK, what's his name?' Boom. 'What's her name?'"* - SOSC coach
>
> *"And I try to encourage them to always whether they see each other in the hall to make sure they say hi to each other, if they're at lunch they don't have to sit together but I encourage them like 'You know maybe you want to have lunch together today' and so I've noticed that a lot more of that is happening."* – SOSC coach

> *"We'll go over [everyone's names] and I say, 'So if you see anybody in the hall make sure you address them by their name, don't just say hi.'"*- SOSC coach

In addition to the abovementioned tactics, coaches referenced two strategies that align with Special Olympics' Unified Strategy in schools: whole school engagement and integrated clubs. Coaches reported that having the entire school community involved improved the Unified Sports experience, enhanced student's feeling of inclusion in the community, and helped address challenges including partner recruitment and support from the school administration and other PE coaches.

Table 27. Importance of whole school engagement

> *"And what we do at our school is – and I've told other teachers, you know, adaptive PE coaches, whatever, coaches – to try to host a scrimmage at their school and invite all the other PE teachers and special day class - or whatever teachers want to come during their class time – to bring their students and sit in the bleachers and watch the game, give them credit for it, and talk about it. Talk about the unified, talk about mixed things, talk about, you know, different types of kids and bring it up for handicap awareness month or whatever. But once the other [classes] came they realized, 'Wow, these kids are good. Oh my gosh, this looks really fun.'"*- SOSC coach
>
> *"Whole school engagement. It just, it makes that whole culminating activity, which is the game that you might be having at your school and another other school, so much more meaningful. And it really backs up the program. So I know that, you know, you might have 20 to 25 students directly involved, but when you have whole school engagement you would be bringing in additional students, you would be bringing in additional faculty, and that just kind of spreads. And we just had a blast hosting one of the events. And it changed everything."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"And working with the other gen ed PE teachers can definitely be a little bit difficult because we'll be dominating a facility for 8 or 9 weeks. And they're used to kind of like rotating every four weeks. And so that can be a challenge but as soon as you do like an event, man, and do that like whole school engagement that goes away. Because then they're like really supportive because they see the impact of the program, they see how good it can be, and they see how it changes perspectives and it changes the way that students interact."* – SOSC coach
>
> *"The recognition at one of our pep rallies was great, they had a big banner for our team and they announced all of the students who participated. So more students are learning about it."* – SOFL coach
>
> *"So they're very inclusive as a school so I think that also helps. Like the partners were full of pride to participate. There wasn't like a... middle school's like a funny age but there wasn't a stigma about them being in Special Olympics. You were prideful to be part of the middle school unified bocce team."* – SOFL coach

Integrated clubs on campus also helped to promote social inclusion outside of Unified Sports, and conversely the presence of Unified Sports was reported to help bolster attendance at these clubs.

Table 28. Importance of integrated clubs on campus

"Well here we have a club that we have the kids get together several times a year. They'll do different events and different parties, they have dances. A lot of times even at homecoming or prom the kids get together during the event." – SOFL coach

"…where I'm at… they have this program where they have general students and they have them come and socialize with our athletes and they have opportunities for them to go out with them on field trips. And that has been very successful. Because they get to know them outside of the Unified Sports program." – SOSC coach

"Well I'm an advisor for our Best Buddies chapter at my school. And I just thought that adding sports is another great way of having activities for our Best Buddies chapter." – SOFL coach

Limitations

It is important to note that the sample size for these interviews was small (n=8). Moreover, interviews were only conducted within the United States and all coaches were school-based, with the majority being adaptive PE teachers. Thus, these responses are not representative of all coaches, but can rather serve to guide questions for coach evaluations in the future.

Discussion

Results from the coach survey complemented results from the player survey and provided insight into the role of coaches in Unified Sports. In particular, coaches talked about their perspective and role on their team's social dynamics. Coaches reported improved social inclusion as a result of Unified Sports and discussed methods used to foster social inclusion. When trying to create a socially inclusive environment on and off the playing field for their teams, nearly all coaches interviewed mentioned cooperative games as one method used. The use of cooperative games could be considered as a promising practice to share with other coaches. Coaches also indicated how the components of Special Olympics' Unified Strategy can serve to complement each other in U.S. schools in a variety of ways. Whole school engagement can not only improve social inclusion in the school, it can help with partner recruitment and administration buy-in. Additionally, Unified Sports strengthens these external initiatives, such as the example where athletes and partners join integrated clubs as a result of their participation in Unified Sports.

One potential area for future research is the exploration of how participating in Special Olympics impacts high school dropout rates. As mentioned in the Unified Sports in School Settings report, negative social experiences reduce the motivation of students with disabilities to stay in school and thus the dropout rate among students with disabilities is significantly higher than those without disabilities (Diament, 2014).

Results from these initial coach interviews indicate that Unified Sports might serve to combat this issue by increasing enthusiasm for class, improving grades and attendance, and creating a more welcoming school culture among both athletes and partners. Future research should continue to explore this impact and also continue to explore the role of coaches on promoting other aspects of social inclusion through Unified Sports.

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Appendix A

Unified Sports player survey – Long version

Program name:_____

Event name: _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): _____

This is a survey to learn about your experience with Special Olympics Unified Sports. All questions are optional and you can stop whenever you want. Your participation in this survey will not affect your participation in Unified Sports. Your opinion is important and we will keep your answers private. There are no right or wrong answers and it is OK if you don't know an answer or don't understand a question.

1. How many years have you participated in Special Olympics Unified Sports? (Select one)

   a. Less than 1 year   d. 5+ years
   b. 1-2 years   e. I don't know
   c. 3-4 years   f. Don't understand question

2. Do you have an intellectual disability? (Select one)

   a. Yes   b. No   c. Don't understand question

3. What is your age? (Select one)

   a. Under 12   e. 35-44
   b. 12-18   f. 45-54
   c. 19-24   g. 55+
   d. 25-34   h. Don't understand question

4. What is your gender? (Select one)

   a. Male   b. Female   c. Don't understand question

5. Where do you live? (Select one)

   a. On my own
   b. With my parents/relatives
   c. In a shared house or apartment with roommates
   d. In a group home or residential facility for people with special needs
   e. Other (please describe):_____
   f. Don't understand question

6. What is your employment status today? (Select one)

   a. Paid work more than 20 hours per week   e. Full-time student
   b. Paid work less than 20 hours per week   f. Retired
   c. Not working, but looking for work   g. Unable to work
   d. Not working, but not looking for work   h. Don't understand question

7. Which of the following best describes your role in Special Olympics Unified Sports? (Select one)

    a. Unified Sports athlete   b. Unified Sports partner   c. Don't understand question

If you are a Unified Sports PARTNER (a player without an intellectual disability) continue to Q8. If not, skip to Q9.

8. Before joining Special Olympics Unified Sports, had you met and talked with people who have intellectual disabilities? (Select one)

    a. Yes   b. No   c. Don't understand question

If YES, mark yes or no for each option below, if NO or DON'T UNDERSTAND QUESTION, skip to Q9:

	Yes ✔	No 🚫	Don't understand question
I am a caregiver/parent of a person with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐
I am a sibling of a person with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐
I have another family member (not sibling or child) with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐
I have a family member with an intellectual disability on my Unified Sports team	☐	☐	☐
I work with people with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
I volunteered with Special Olympics in the past	☐	☐	☐
I had friends with intellectual disabilities before joining Unified Sports	☐	☐	☐
I went/go to school with people with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
I had other contacts with people with intellectual disabilities before joining Unified Sports (please describe):	☐	☐	☐

9. The next questions are about your experiences with Unified Sports. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree 🙂	Agree 🙂	Disagree 🙁	Strongly Disagree 🙁	I don't know ❓	Don't understand question
As a result of Unified Sports, I'm more comfortable talking to people with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I'm more comfortable talking to people without an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I do more activities in my community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I feel healthier	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, my sports skills have improved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I joined another sports team outside of Unified Sports (or plan to in the future)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

As a result of Unified Sports, I exercise more every week	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I have more friends with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I have more friends without intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I plan to play Unified Sports again	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Do you have at least one friend that you like to talk to or do things with from your Unified Sports team? (Select one)

    a. Yes   b. No   c. I don't know   d. Don't understand question

If YES, answer Q11 and Q12. If NO, I DON'T KNOW, or DON'T UNDERSTAND, skip to Q13

11. Think about your closest friend on your Unified Sports team. Do they have an intellectual disability? (Select one)

    a. Yes   b. No   c. I don't know   d. Don't understand question

12. Think about your closest friend on your Unified Sports team. Please mark whether or not you have done the following activities with this friend, or if you would do them in the future.

	Yes	Not yet, but would in the future	No	I don't know	Don't understand question
Hang out with him/her outside of Unified Sports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lend him/her something that belongs to you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Share a secret with him/her	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have him/her over to your house	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stand up for him/her if others are being mean	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eat a meal with him/her outside of Unified Sports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Call him/her on the telephone	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Text/SMS him/her	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Introduce him/her to your other friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Choose him/her as a partner in a game	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friend him/her on Facebook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Go together to a sports match, movie, or other activity in the community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Think about activities your <u>whole team</u> may do together, off the playing field, to have fun and get to know each other better. Outside of training and competition, does your team do any activities together?

    a. Yes   b. No   c. Don't understand question

14. How much did your coach focus on each of the following things at practices and competition?

	A lot	A little	Not at all	Don't understand question
Improving sports skills	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improving social skills	☐	☐	☐	☐

Making new friends	☐	☐	☐	☐
Winning	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working as a team	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please describe):	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. Since playing Special Olympics Unified Sports, how often do you do the following?

	Never	Less than once a week	Once a week	Twice a week	More than twice a week	I don't know	Don't understand question
Exercise/play sports as part of Unified Sports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exercise/play sports outside of Unified Sports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. How many weeks long is your current Unified Sports season? (Select one)

a. Less than 1 week   e. 9-10 weeks

b. 1-3 weeks   f. More than 10 weeks

c. 4-6 weeks   g. I don't know

d. 7-8 weeks   h. Don't understand question

17. On average, how long is each training session for your Special Olympics Unified Sports team? (Select one)

a. Less than a half hour (30 minutes)   d. 1.5 hours (90 minutes) or more

b. A half hour (30 minutes) to less than 1 hour e. I don't know

c. 1 hour to less than 1.5 hours (90 minutes)   f. Don't understand question

18. Why did you decide to sign up for Special Olympics Unified Sports? (Select yes or no for each option)

	Yes ✔	No 🚫	Don't understand question
To play sports with people with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
To play sports with people without intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
To try a new sport	☐	☐	☐
To start playing sports again	☐	☐	☐
To improve my health and fitness	☐	☐	☐
To improve my social skills	☐	☐	☐
To improve my sports skills	☐	☐	☐
To make new friends	☐	☐	☐
To meet people with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
To meet people without intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
To do community service/charity work	☐	☐	☐
Because my friends were playing	☐	☐	☐
Because someone else signed me up	☐	☐	☐

Other (please describe):	☐	☐	☐

19. What has been your favorite part about participating in Unified Sports?

20. What, if anything, would you change or improve about Unified Sports?

This is the end of the player survey. Thank you for your participation!

To be completed by the interviewer:

Interviewer initials:_____

1. How many of the questions did you read aloud to the player?
   a. All   b. Most   c. Some   d. None

2. Where was this survey conducted?
   a. Practice
   b. Competition
   c. School
   d. Other _____

3. Approximately how many minutes did it take to complete this survey? _____

4. Between the last player you surveyed and this player you surveyed, how many players declined to participate?_____

5. Before this event, what was your experience with Special Olympics and/or people with intellectual disabilities? (Circle all that apply)
   a. I have a family member with intellectual disabilities
   b. I have a friend or acquaintance with intellectual disabilities
   c. I am/was a Special Olympics coach
   d. I work(ed) with people with intellectual disabilities in my job or at my school
   e. I volunteered for Special Olympics in the past
   f. Other (Describe):_____
   _____
   g. I had no experience with people with intellectual disabilities.

6. Did you know or had you met the person before you administered this survey?
   a. Yes   b. No

7. Which questions, if any, were difficult for the player to understand and/or answer? (Write the question number if possible).

8. Please provide any additional feedback on your experience administering this survey and recommendations for how Special Olympics should collect this type of data in the future.

Appendix B

Unified Sports player survey – Short version

Program name:_____

Event name: _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): _____

This is a survey to learn about your experience with Special Olympics Unified Sports. All questions are optional and you can stop whenever you want. Your participation in this survey will not affect your participation in Unified Sports. Your opinion is important and we will keep your answers private. There are no right or wrong answers and it is OK if you don't know an answer or don't understand a question.

1. How many years have you participated in Special Olympics Unified Sports? (Select one)

   a. Less than 1 year

   b. 1-2 years

   c. 3-4 years

   d. 5+ years

   e. I don't know

   f. Don't understand question

2. Do you have an intellectual disability? (Select one)

   a. Yes

   b. No

   c. Don't understand question

3. What is your age? (Select one)

   a. Under 12

   b. 12-18

   c. 19-24

   d. 25-34

   e. 35-44

   f. 45-54

   g. 55+

   h. Don't understand question

4. What is your gender? (Select one)

   a. Male

   b. Female

   c. Don't understand question

5. Where do you live? (Select one)

   a. On my own

   b. With my parents/relatives

   c. In a shared house or apartment with roommates

   d. In a group home or residential facility for people with special needs

   e. Other (please describe):_____

   f. Don't understand question

6. What is your employment status today? (Select one)

   a. Paid work more than 20 hours per week

   b. Paid work less than 20 hours per week

   c. Not working, but looking for work

   d. Not working, but not looking for work

   e. Full-time student

   f. Retired

   g. Unable to work

   h. Don't understand question

7. Which of the following best describes your role in Special Olympics Unified Sports? (Select one)

    a. Unified Sports athlete   b. Unified Sports partner   c. Don't understand question

If you are a Unified Sports PARTNER (a player without an intellectual disability) continue to Q8. If not, skip to Q9.

8. Before joining Special Olympics Unified Sports, had you met and talked with people who have intellectual disabilities? (Select one)

    b. Yes   b. No   c. Don't understand question

If YES, mark yes or no for each option below, if NO or DON'T UNDERSTAND QUESTION, skip to Q9:

	Yes ✔️	No 🚫	Don't understand question
I am a caregiver/parent of a person with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐
I am a sibling of a person with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐
I have another family member (not sibling or child) with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐
I have a family member with an intellectual disability on my Unified Sports team	☐	☐	☐
I work with people with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
I volunteered with Special Olympics in the past	☐	☐	☐
I had friends with intellectual disabilities before joining Unified Sports	☐	☐	☐
I went/go to school with people with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
I had other contacts with people with intellectual disabilities before joining Unified Sports (please describe):	☐	☐	☐

9. The next questions are about your experiences with Unified Sports. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree 🙂	Agree 🙂	Disagree 🙁	Strongly Disagree 🙁	I don't know ❓	Don't understand question
As a result of Unified Sports, I'm more comfortable talking to people with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I'm more comfortable talking to people without an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I do more activities in my community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I feel healthier	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, my sports skills have improved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I joined another sports team outside of Unified Sports (or plan to in the future)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I exercise more every week	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

As a result of Unified Sports, I have more friends with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As a result of Unified Sports, I have more friends without intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I plan to play Unified Sports again	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Please provide any additional comments about your experience with Unified Sports:

This is the end of the player survey. Thank you for your participation!

Appendix C

Unified Sports Coach survey

Program name:
Date:
Name:
Other information:

This is a survey to learn about your coaching experience with Special Olympics Unified Sports®. The results from this survey will be used to learn about best practices and improve the Unified Sports program. Thank you for completing this survey and for your time and dedication to Special Olympics Unified Sports! We are grateful for everything that you do for your athletes, partners, and Special Olympics!

The following questions are about your experience as a Unified Sport coach in general:

1. Have you coached with Special Olympics before becoming involved with Unified Sports? If yes, how many years?

2. How long have you been a Unified Sports coach?

3. Why did you decide to become a Unified Sports coach?

4. What background experiences (education, training, work experience, etc.) and/or personality traits do you find to be most useful in your experience as a Unified Sports coach?

5. What are the ages of your oldest and youngest players on your Unified Sports team?

6. Next, we want to know about what is most important for you to focus on as a Unified Sports coach during practices and competitions for your athletes and partners. Please score the following items on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being very important, and 10 being not important at all.

	Score:
Improving physical fitness	
Improving sports skills	
Improving social skills	
Making new friends	
Winning	
Working as a team	
Meaningful involvement on the playing field from all players	
Other (please describe):	

7. Do you do anything to encourage your athletes and partners to mix socially as a team outside of Unified Sports practices and competitions? If yes, what are some activities you have found to be effective in bringing athletes and partners together off the playing field?

8. What are/were the biggest challenges for you as a Unified Sports coach?

9. The next question is about characteristics you may have considered when recruiting partners. Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 how important each item was when you recruited partners, with 1 being very important and 10 being not important at all.
   a. Partners are similar ages to athletes:
   b. Partners are similar ability levels to athletes:
   c. Partners have experience with people with intellectual disabilities:
   d. Partners are popular with other youth:
   e. Partners have past experience in the sport:
   f. Other (please describe):

10. What is/was the most important benefit of participating in Unified Sports for your athletes?

11. What is/was the most important benefit of participating in Unified Sports for your partners?

12. What are the biggest changes if any you saw in your athletes and partners while participating in Unified Sports? (please provide specific changes if possible)

13. The following questions are about specific changes that you might have seen in your athletes and partners while participating in Unified Sports. Please indicate whether you have observed the following changes in your athletes, your partners, or neither.

	Athletes	Partners	Neither
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem more comfortable talking to people with an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem more comfortable talking to people without an intellectual disability	☐	☐	☐
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem to do more activities in their community	☐	☐	☐
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem healthier	☐	☐	☐
Since participating in Unified Sports, their sports skills have improved	☐	☐	☐

Since participating in Unified Sports, they joined another sports team outside of Unified Sports (or plan to in the future)	☐	☐	☐
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem to exercise more every week	☐	☐	☐
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem to have more friends with intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐
Since participating in Unified Sports, they seem to have more friends without intellectual disabilities	☐	☐	☐

14. We are interested in learning about how friendships get made on the playing field. Why do you think that some athletes and partners form friendships and not others?

The following questions are about your experience as a Unified Sports coach this season:

15. What sport do you currently coach?

16. How many weeks long is your current Unified Sports season? (Select one) *[Do not read answer choices aloud]*

    a. Less than 1 week   d. 7-8 weeks
    b. 1-3 weeks   e. 9-10 weeks
    c. 4-6 weeks   f. More than 10 weeks

17. How often does your Unified Sports team practice?
    a. Never   d. Twice a week
    b. Less than once a week   e. More than twice a week
    c. Once a week

18. On average, how long is each training session for your Unified Sports team? *[Do not read answer choices aloud]*
    d. Less than a half hour (30 minutes)   c. 1 hour to less than 1.5 hours (90 minutes)
    e. A half hour (30 minutes) to less than 1 hour   d. 1.5 hours (90 minutes) or more

19. How many times has/will your Unified Sports team compete(d) against other Unified Sports teams this season?_____

20. What is your age? *[Do not read answer choices aloud]*
    a. Less than 20   d. 40 – 49
    b. 20 – 29   e. 50 – 59
    c. 30 – 39   f. 60+

21. What is your gender?
    a.   Male   b. Female

22. Please provide any additional comments you would like to share about your experience with Unified Sports:

Appendix D

Survey Implementation FAQ

Survey Frequently Asked Questions: ESPN Unified Sports Grants

To help with ongoing monitoring and evaluation efforts for Unified Sports, SOI has developed a survey to measure the outcomes of Unified Sports in your Program. This document provides information about this survey. If you have any additional questions or feedback on this process, please contact Kasey Haas (Specialist, Research and Evaluation) at (khaas@specialolympics.org) or Marie Merritt (Senior Manager, Unified Sports) at (mmerritt@specialolympics.org).

Overview of survey

Q: What questions will this survey answer?
> This survey is trying to answer four important questions about Unified Sports:
> 1. Does Unified Sports improve social inclusion among athletes and partners, as well as in the broader community?
> 2. Does Unified Sports improve participants' health and physical activity?
> 3. Does Unified Sports improve participants' sports participation outside of Special Olympics?
> 4. What are the demographics of Unified Sports partners and athletes?
>
> In addition, your feedback on the execution of this survey will provide valuable information on how to best collect data on Unified Sports in Programs.

Q: Why is this survey important?
> This survey will help you meet the research requirement of your ESPN Unified Sports grant. In addition, it will help us determine the impact of Unified Sports in your Program and across Programs. We will also provide you with the results from this survey, which will help you demonstrate your impact to internal and external stakeholders.

Q: Who will take the survey?
> This survey will be administered to Special Olympics Unified Sports athletes and partners.

Q: What if I want to make changes to the surveys?
> While we have tried to make all of the questions relevant to all Programs, it is possible that changes might need to be made to the survey to make sure that your audience understands the questions and that it is culturally relevant. We will be sending out a draft version of the survey for you to review and provide feedback on and we will consider making changes at this time. While we cannot accommodate all changes, we will consider any revisions that will help Programs gather the information they need.

Administering the survey
Q: Where should the survey be administered?
> The survey can be administered at a practice, competition, or another location where you have frequent and easy access to athletes and partners (e.g. at school). It should be done near the end of the season so that participants have had enough experience with Unified Sports to comment on their participation.

Q: Should the survey be conducted electronically or using a printed paper version?

Your Program can choose to have participants fill out the survey electronically (in person or through email) or on paper.

1) Paper: You can print the survey and have participants fill it out on site. Someone in your Program will then enter the results from your paper surveys into our online system (Qualtrics) after your event. If you pursue this option, be sure to account for the time required to complete the data entry that will need to be done later.

2) Electronically (in person): If your Program decides to use the electronic format, SOI can provide you a link to a survey for participants to fill out online or with an app that can allow for the survey to be taken offline. For Programs with tablets or laptops, this may be a great option. You can bring your tablets/laptops to the event and have participants enter their responses directly into the system. This is helpful to avoid doing data entry after the event.

3) Electronically (through email): If your Program chooses to use this format, you will send out a link to an online survey through email to all participants. This can be a great option for Programs who have email addresses of their participants and whose athletes and partners have easy access to computers and the Internet. In some cases, Programs have found that few participants will open and fill out an emailed survey, so consider if this is a challenge your Program would face before pursuing this option.

Q: Do I need to recruit volunteers to help with this survey?

Yes. Before the practice/competition, you will need to find and recruit people to administer the survey (we recommend using a local partner or volunteers). The survey has been designed so that an "interviewer" will be available to assist any participant who needs help with the survey. Depending on the needs of the participant, the interviewer can either:

1.   Read aloud the questions and answers and record the participant's responses

2.   Allow the participant to complete the survey independently, but standby for any questions

Having a third party dedicated to running this activity has several benefits. It allows your staff to remain engaged in the practice/competition without being pulled away to administer the survey, it exposes the partner to Special Olympics, and it will help you collect more, unbiased responses from athletes and partners. Some possible partners are a University or your local Lions Leos club. Speak with whoever will be administering the survey to make sure that they understand their role and how to work with athletes and partners to fill out the survey. We have created a separate document for volunteers with tips on how to administer the survey.

Q: What do I need to do before the practice/competition?

See above for preparation regarding volunteers. It can also be helpful to ask one of your athletes to fill out a test survey prior to the event to help you anticipate some of the questions the survey administrators might encounter. In addition, keep in mind the following:

1.   Paper: You will need to print out the surveys in advance of your event. You should type out the information on the top of your survey about your event (Program name, event name, and date) before printing the surveys. Be sure to staple the pages together! It is easy for pages to get lost, and stapling can help avoid this issue.

2.   Electronically: If you are using technology, you need to check to be sure that you will have a strong wireless internet connection where the practice/event is being held or that you have downloaded the app to conduct the surveys offline (speak to Kasey Haas for more information about this option). If you are concerned that there may be problems, be sure to bring extra paper copies just in case.

Q: Do I need to translate the survey?

The surveys are in English, so we realize that some Programs will need to translate the surveys before administering them. Please discuss with Kasey Haas the best way to translate the survey into your language(s). Once this is complete we can upload this translated version into our online platform, Qualtrics. This will allow you to view the survey in your native language any time you access the survey online. We highly recommend taking advantage of this option, since it will allow for much easier data entry.

Q: When during the practice/competition should the surveys be administered?

Depending on whether you conduct the survey at a practice or competition, this will vary. When considering how to administer the survey, think carefully about the flow of your practice or competition to determine what is best for your Program. Here are a few tips:

1. Practice: Work with the coach to determine the best time to conduct the survey. It can oftentimes be easier to do the survey with everyone at the same time, at either the beginning or end of practice. If you are doing it electronically, the number of computers/tablets available will be another factor to consider and you will need to work with the coach to determine the best way to conduct the survey with a few participants at a time.
2. Competition: Consider the structure of your event and look for periods of free time when either all players or certain teams could complete the survey. Having a group of volunteers move team by team administering the survey based on a schedule of when certain teams are free is one possible solution. Determine what is best based on the flow of your event, use of technology, and the number of people available to administer the survey.

To increase the chances that the surveys are completed properly and returned, we recommend that you create a formal process ahead of time including when you will hand out the surveys, how to provide instructions, and then how you will collect the completed surveys on site. We hope that you will share your experiences with us and with each other, so that we can continue to improve on this process.

Q: What if some of the participants need help filling out the survey?

We have designed the survey so that it can be filled out with an interviewer. If needed, the interviewer will read the questions aloud and fill in the participant's response. In some cases, a participant may not be able to understand a question, even with the help of an interviewer. If this is the case the interviewer can mark "Do not understand question" as the answer choice.

Q: Do all of the participants at a practice/competition need to complete a survey?

Ideally, you will survey all participants, but that will not always be possible. It might only be possible to survey a sample of the participants, and that will still provide valuable information about the event.

Q: If I am conducting these surveys at practices, how many different teams do I need to survey?

This will depend on the number of teams in your Program and your capacity. We hope to survey as many as possible, since this will improve the validity of your results, but we understand that there may be limitations. Please contact us with any questions on this subject and we can work with you individually.

Q: Is there funding available for this work?

We have limited funding available to help Programs that need specific assistance with this

project. We can support your Program with technology needs (e.g. the purchase of tablets), translation, data entry, incentives, or in other ways if necessary. Please contact Kasey Haas with requests.

Data Entry

Q: What system are we using for data entry?

We are using Qualtrics, which is an online tool where we can create surveys, collect and store data, analyze data, and create reports.

Q: What is the process for data entry?

SOI will provide the links to the online surveys in Qualtrics. The survey in Qualtrics will look just like the paper version of the survey. To share the survey results with SOI, you have a few options –

1) Live data entry: For Programs who are choosing to use the electronic (in person) or electronic (by email) option, participants will be submitting their responses directly into Qualtrics and no additional data entry will be needed.
2) Data entry after your event: If you are using the paper version of the survey, someone in your Program will need to enter the results from your paper surveys into Qualtrics after your event. You can also consider asking volunteers to help with this work.

Q: If I am doing data entry after my event, how do I start?

1. Open the survey: Use the Qualtrics link given to you by SOI to access the survey. **Note:** Qualtrics works best in Microsoft Explorer or Firefox. Please make sure that you are using the most recent version of your browser.
2. Enter event information: Be sure to enter this information correctly
3. Enter survey responses: Carefully enter survey responses into Qualtrics as you see them on paper
4. Click submit: Once you click submit that response will be saved into the system. You will then be redirected back to the first page of the survey.

Q: Does the person doing data entry need to translate open-ended answers back into English?

The majority of questions on this survey will be multiple choice, however a few will be open-ended. If possible, please translate the responses back to English before entering in Qualtrics. If not possible, we hope you will share some highlights with us.

Q: How long will data entry take?

We estimate it will take approximately five to seven minutes to enter one survey.

Q: Will I see the results from my event?

Yes, please let us know when data entry is complete, and we can send you the raw data and/or a report.

Q: Additional questions or feedback?

Please contact Kasey Haas (khaas@specialolympics.org) or Marie Merritt (mmerritt@specialolympics.org) with any questions or feedback on this process.

Appendix E

Tablet Instructions

Using tablets for research and evaluation

Setting-up your tablet:
***Note**: While the following directions are for Apple iPads, the app and online survey are also available on android devices.
1. Choose your region and country and connect to a Wi-Fi network if available.
2. Enable location services
3. Set up as a new iPad
4. Sign in with your Apple ID using the following ID:
    a. Apple ID: research@specialolympics.org
    b. Password: Soi2015!
5. Select "Don't use iCloud"
6. Create a Passcode using the following passcode: 1968
7. Select "Use Siri"
8. Select "Automatically send" for Diagnostics
9. Select "Share with app developers" for App Analytics
Your setup should now be complete!

Using the online survey:
To access the online survey simply open a web browser (preferably internet explorer or Safari) and use the link provided by SOI. Answer the questions and click ">>" to move through the survey. Once you are finished you will be notified that your responses have been saved and you will be directed to the beginning of the survey.

Using the offline app:
Before your event:
1. Download the app:
    a. Go to the app store and search for "Qualtrics surveys". The Qualtrics app has this icon:
    b. Install the app using:
        i. Apple ID: research@specialolympics.org
        ii. Password: Soi2015!
2. Once the app is installed, log in using:
    a. Username: so_research
    b. Password: champion!
3. Next, you will need to download the "Unified Sports player survey". You must be connected to Wi-Fi in order to do this. To download the survey select the "Unified Sports player survey" and click the green Download survey button. **Be sure to do this before your event because you will not be able to download the survey if you are disconnected from Wi-Fi.**
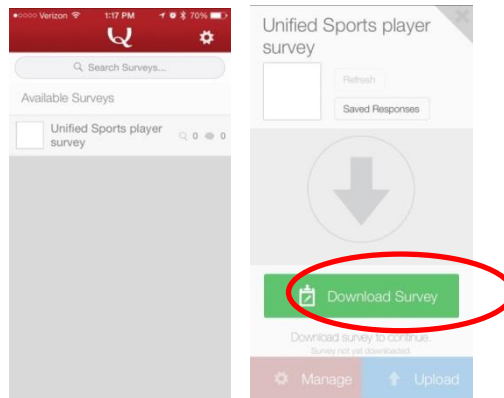
Administering the survey:

Provide the following information to any volunteer that will be using tablets:

1. Once you have downloaded the survey, you can open the survey and select "Take survey". This will lead you to the beginning of the survey.
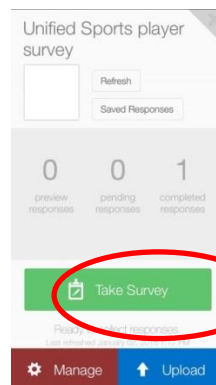
*Tip: When administering the survey it displays best when the tablet is turned sideways (landscape) rather than upright (portrait).
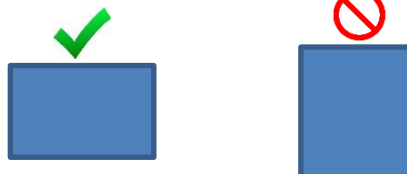
2. Answer all of the questions, and move forward by clicking the next button: Continue through the survey until you see the screen with the "Restart" button.

*Note: Throughout the survey you will see two grey symbols at the top corners of the screen: (exit) and (restart). Do NOT click these buttons. Clicking these buttons during a survey will delete the data from that survey! Continue to hit the ">>" button until you are asked to restart (see #6).

3. After you complete a survey, you will be prompted to click "Restart". This will save the survey you just entered and bring you back to the beginning of the survey, allowing you to begin a new one.

4. As you complete surveys, they will be stored in the app as "pending responses". You can see how many you have completed in the opening page of the survey.

After your event:
Once you are finished collecting surveys you will need to connect back to Wi-Fi. **Do not log out of the app! If you log out you will lose ALL survey data that was stored**. After you have connected back to Wi-Fi you can upload the surveys into the Qualtrics system by selecting the blue "Upload" button in the opening page of the survey. Once this is complete all of your "pending responses" will become "completed responses".

Testing:
It is likely you will want to test the app and/or online survey before your event. This is a great idea and will help you get a better feel for what volunteers will be experiencing in the field (we recommend it!). **When you test the app, please record your event name as "TEST" so that it will be easily identifiable when we look at the data**.

Troubleshooting:
It is possible that you will encounter troubles when trying to upload the surveys from the app back into Qualtrics. If you have a problem, try these solutions first:
1. Be sure you have a strong Wi-Fi connection. Your responses will not upload unless you are connected to Wi-Fi.
2. Be sure you are using the newest version of the app. If you are using the latest version a green bar will appear at the top of the app's home screen indicating that it is up to date. You can also check by visiting the Apple app store.
If you check both of these solutions and continue to experience problems please contact Kasey Haas (khaas@specialolympics.org).

Other important notes:

1. Do not link any bank account or payment information to the research@specialolympics.org Apple ID. This ID is used by any Program with a SOI iPad doing research and evaluation work. If you connect your bank information, you could be paying for someone else's apps!
2. There are three things to watch out for which could jeopardize your survey data:
    a. Do **NOT** click either of the grey buttons at the top of the survey (if this accidentally happens, don't worry – you will get a warning message before anything happens)
    b. Do **NOT** log out of the app
    c. Do **NOT** delete the app from your tablet

Questions? Contact Kasey Haas, Research and Evaluation Specialist, at khaas@specialolympics.org

Appendix F

Volunteer FAQ – Long survey version

Administering a survey

People with intellectual disabilities are among the most marginalized populations in the world. They are oftentimes stigmatized and excluded from society. Sport is a unifying force that brings people from different backgrounds together over a shared interest. Special Olympics Unified Sports brings players with and without intellectual disabilities together as teammates and competitors on the field of play – paving the way for social inclusion.

We now need to better understand the impacts of Unified Sports. Past evaluations show that Unified Sports can improve players' self-confidence, social and communication skills, and help athletes challenge stereotypes and build friendships. Learning more about Unified Sports will help us improve and expand programming. This survey will begin to answer the following questions about Unified Sports:
5. Does Unified Sports improve social inclusion among players and in the broader community?
6. Does Unified Sports improve players' health and physical activity?
7. Does Unified Sports improve players' sports participation outside of Special Olympics?
8. What are the demographics of Unified Sports players?

This survey will be given out to players with and without intellectual disabilities. Your role is to help collect responses and to assist any players who need help filling out the survey. Below we have included some useful information to help you with this process. Thank you for helping us answer these important questions! This survey will be distributed globally, and your participation is important to its success.

Conducting the survey

Here are some important steps when administering the survey:
1. *Explain to the player what you are doing*

Be sure the player knows what the survey is. It is likely that the player has never taken a survey before and will need to know what it is and why you are doing it. You may open with a sentence such as: "Hello, my name is _____. We are doing a survey about Unified Sports. I would like to ask you some questions about your experience with Unified Sports so we can learn about what is good and what we can change to make it better."

2. *Ask if they would like to participate*

It is important that the player consents to participating in the survey. Be sure that they know that they have a choice, their answers are private, and this will not affect their participation in Unified Sports. Ask them if they would like to participate before beginning. If they say yes, continue with the survey. If they say no, then do not have that player complete the survey.

3. *Ask if they would like to do the survey with you or by themselves*

This survey is designed so that a player can take it with an interviewer or independently. If a

player has trouble with reading or comprehension, it is likely that they will need you to serve as an interviewer. If this is the case you will read the questions and answers aloud to the player and then mark their response on the survey form or tablet. If they want to take the survey independently, hand the survey to the participant, but you should stay nearby in case they have any questions. If they want to take it with an interviewer then continue with administering the survey. Before you start, be sure to tell the player that there are no right or wrong answers; we just want to know about their experience.

4. *Administer the survey*

If the player is taking the survey independently, you should wait close by until the player is finished taking the survey (if you are using tablets, be sure to explain to the player to press "next" to see the next question). If you are serving as an interviewer, please read the questions and answer choices aloud to the player exactly as they are written. When recording any open-ended responses, do your best to write down the answer exactly as the player says it.

5. *Answer questions when needed*

During the survey, if a player does not understand a question or concept, you may try to explain, but stay as close to the question as possible. If a player continues to have trouble understanding, you/they should select the "don't understand question" option, which is available for every question.

6. *Complete the interviewer portion*

At the end of each survey, there is a section for you to fill out about how the survey went. Please complete this after every survey. This is where you can tell us if you interviewed the player or not, if they needed help with any questions, and any other comments on that particular survey.

Other tips

Keeping these tips in mind when you are surveying players will help you to get the best responses:

1. *Keep others from influencing the player's answers*

We want the answers of the players to be their true answers. If a coach or other players are standing next to them, it is possible that this could change the way that they respond to questions. When possible, try your best to make sure the answers recorded are the responses of the player.

2. *Remain neutral*

You can be an influence too! Remain positive throughout the experience, and try to communicate a neutral, nonjudgmental position. Also, be careful that when explaining questions you do not change the meaning, as this can change the answer the player gives.

3. *Make the player feel comfortable*

This will likely be a new experience for the player. Be sure that they feel comfortable by explaining the process and purpose of the survey, finding a place with fewer distractions, and remaining positive.

Thank you again for your time and help with this project! The answers you provide will help us to improve and grow Unified Sports!

Appendix G

Administering a survey

People with intellectual disabilities are among the most marginalized populations in the world. They are oftentimes stigmatized and excluded from society. Sport is a unifying force that brings people from different backgrounds together over a shared interest. Special Olympics Unified Sports brings players with and without intellectual disabilities together as teammates and competitors on the field of play – paving the way for social inclusion.

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9. Does Unified Sports improve social inclusion among players and in the broader community?
10. Does Unified Sports improve players' health and physical activity?
11. Does Unified Sports improve players' sports participation outside of Special Olympics?
12. What are the demographics of Unified Sports players?

This survey will be given out to players with and without intellectual disabilities. Your role is to help collect responses and to assist any players who need help filling out the survey. Below we have included some useful information to help you with this process. Thank you for helping us answer these important questions! This survey will be distributed globally, and your participation is important to its success.

Conducting the survey

Here are some important steps when administering the survey:

7. *Explain to the player what you are doing*

Be sure the player knows what the survey is. It is likely that the player has never taken a survey before and will need to know what it is and why you are doing it. You may open with a sentence such as: "Hello, my name is _____. We are doing a survey about Unified Sports. I would like to ask you some questions about your experience with Unified Sports so we can learn about what is good and what we can change to make it better."

8. *Ask if they would like to participate*

It is important that the player consents to participating in the survey. Be sure that they know that they have a choice, their answers are private, and this will not affect their participation in Unified Sports. Ask them if they would like to participate before beginning. If they say yes, continue with the survey. If they say no, then do not have that player complete the survey.

9. *Ask if they would like to do the survey with you or by themselves*

This survey is designed so that a player can take it with an interviewer or independently. If a

player has trouble with reading or comprehension, it is likely that they will need you to serve as an interviewer. If this is the case you will read the questions and answers aloud to the player and then mark their response on the survey form or tablet. If they want to take the survey independently, hand the survey to the participant, but you should stay nearby in case they have any questions. If they want to take it with an interviewer then continue with administering the survey. Before you start, be sure to tell the player that there are no right or wrong answers; we just want to know about their experience.

10. *Administer the survey*

If the player is taking the survey independently, you should wait close by until the player is finished taking the survey (if you are using tablets, be sure to explain to the player to press "next" to see the next question). If you are serving as an interviewer, please read the questions and answer choices aloud to the player exactly as they are written. When recording any open-ended responses, do your best to write down the answer exactly as the player says it.

11. Answer questions when needed

During the survey, if a player does not understand a question or concept, you may try to explain, but stay as close to the question as possible. If a player continues to have trouble understanding, you/they should select the "don't understand question" option, which is available for every question.

Other tips

Keeping these tips in mind when you are surveying players will help you to get the best responses:

4. *Keep others from influencing the player's answers*

We want the answers of the players to be their true answers. If a coach or other players are standing next to them, it is possible that this could change the way that they respond to questions. When possible, try your best to make sure the answers recorded are the responses of the player.

5. *Remain neutral*

You can be an influence too! Remain positive throughout the experience, and try to communicate a neutral, nonjudgmental position. Also, be careful that when explaining questions you do not change the meaning, as this can change the answer the player gives.

6. *Make the player feel comfortable*

This will likely be a new experience for the player. Be sure that they feel comfortable by explaining the process and purpose of the survey, finding a place with fewer distractions, and remaining positive.

Thank you again for your time and help with this project! The answers you provide will help us to improve and grow Unified Sports!

Stratified background information of people who reported having ID
and people who reported not having ID

Characteristics of Respondents with ID

Variable	N	%
<u>Years in Unified Sports</u>		
Less than one year		42.4
1-2 years	368	25.9
3-4 years	225	15.0
5+ years	130	11.3
Don't know	98	4.3
Don't understand	37	.7
Missing	6	.5
	4	

<u>Age</u>		
Under 12	50	5.8
12-18	420	48.4
19-24	248	28.6
25-34	100	11.5
35-44	18	2.1
45-54	13	1.5
55+	1	0.1
Don't Understand	10	1.2
Missing	8	0.9

<u>Gender</u>		
Male	597	68.8
Female	263	30.3
Don't Understand	3	.3
Missing	5	0.6

<u>Living Situation</u>		
On my own	26	3.0
With parents/relatives	781	90.0
Shared house/apartment	3	0.3

Group home	50	5.8
Other	2	0.2
Don't understand	1	0.1
Missing	5	0.6
Employment Status		
Paid more than 20 hours	38	4.4
Paid less than 20 hours	63	7.3
Not working, looking	83	9.6
Not working, not looking	71	8.2
Full-time student	515	59.3
Retired	6	0.7
Unable to work	57	6.6
Don't understand	25	2.9
Missing	10	1.2
Role in Unified Sports		
Athlete	794	91.5
Partner	42	4.8
Don't understand	25	2.9
Missing	7	0.8

Characteristics of Respondents without ID

Variable	N	%
Years in Unified Sports		
Less than one year		64.2
1-2 years	489	20.1
3-4 years	153	5.1
5+ years	39	3.8
Don't know	29	5.4
Don't understand	41	0.5
Missing	4	0.9
	7	
Age		
Under 12	7	5.8
12-18	466	48.4
19-24	159	28.6

25-34	58	11.5
35-44	43	2.1
45-54	20	1.5
55+	7	0.1
Don't Understand	0	0.0
Missing	2	0.3

Gender

Male	427	56.0
Female	332	43.6
Don't Understand	0	0.0
Missing	3	0.4

Living Situation

On my own	87	11.4
With parents/relatives	577	75.7
Shared house/apartment	32	4.2
Group home	10	1.3
Other	55	7.2
Don't understand	0	0.0
Missing	1	0.1

Employment Status

Paid more than 20 hours	121	15.9
Paid less than 20 hours	42	5.5
Not working, looking	48	6.3
Not working, not looking	46	6.0
Full-time student	468	61.4
Retired	7	0.9
Unable to work	14	1.8
Don't understand	9	1.2
Missing	7	0.9

Role in Unified Sports

Athlete	74	9.7
Partner	664	87.1
Don't understand	14	1.8
Missing	10	1.3

Reasons for Signing up for Unified Sports, Respondents with ID

Reason	Yes	No	Don't Understand
To play sports **with** people with ID	87.9% (270)	7.8% (24)	4.2 (13)
To play sports **without** people with ID	83% (254)	13.4% (41)	3.6% (11)
To try a new sport	77% (248)	19.6% (63)	3.4% (11)
To start playing sports again	80.6% (250)	15.8% (49)	3.5% (11)
To improve my health and fitness	94.3% (300)	4.4% (14)	1.3% (4)
To improve my social skills	93.9% (291)	5.2% (16)	1.0% (3)
To improve my sports skills	94.5% (294)	4.2% (13)	1.3% (4)
To make new friends	95.8% (299)	3.8% (12)	0.3% (1)
To meet people with ID	87.3% (268)	7.8 (24)	4.9 (15)
To meet people without ID	85.2% (260)	10.8 (33)	3.9 (12)
To do community service/charity work	59.7% (181)	34% (103)	6.3% (19)
Because my friends were playing	79.9% (246)	16.9% (52)	3.2% (10)
Because someone else signed me up	58.5% (176)	36.5% (110)	5.0% (15)
Other	65.2% (30)	15.2% (7)	19.6% (9)

Reasons for Signing up for Unified Sports, Respondents without ID

Reason	Yes	No	Don't Understand
To play sports **with** people with ID	90.4% (293)	9.3% (30)	0.3 (1)
To play sports **without** people with ID	57.6% (185)	41.4% (133)	0.9% (3)
To try a new sport	63% (206)	36.7% (120)	0.3% (1)
To start playing sports again	57.3% (185)	42.7% (138)	0% (0)
To improve my health and fitness	79.8% (261)	19.9% (65)	0.3% (1)
To improve my social skills	87.6% (283)	12.1% (39)	0.3% (1)
To improve my sports skills	83.6% (270)	16.4% (53)	0% (0)
To make new friends	88.7% (283)	11% (35)	0.3% (1)
To meet people with ID	88.7% (289)	11% (36)	0.3 (1)
To meet people without ID	71.8% (232)	27.2 (88)	0.9 (3)
To do community service/charity work	76.7% (253)	23% (76)	0.3% (1)
Because my friends were playing	52.2% (167)	47.8% (153)	0.0% (0)
Because someone else signed me up	32% (101)	67.1% (212)	.9% (3)
Other	63.1% (41)	27.7% (18)	9.2% (6)