

# Unified Volleyball and Beach Volleyball Observers One Sheet

## Unified Sports - MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT

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

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

**Sport:** Unified Volleyball/Beach Volleyball

**How it works:** Teams should consist of approximately equal numbers of athletes and Unified partners. Each Unified Volleyball team must start the match with three athletes and three partners who are physically able to play. Each Beach Volleyball must start the match with two athletes and two partners who are physically able to play. If a team cannot comply with the minimum roster size at the start of the match, the team must forfeit. In the event a partner becomes unable to play during the match due to injury or illness and no substitute partner is available, the team may continue to play with five players in Unified Volleyball or three players in Unified Beach Volleyball. The lineup can never exceed or fall below three athletes and two partners on Unified Volleyball teams and two athletes and one partner on Beach Volleyball teams.

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

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

1. Players consistently not utilizing teammates, ignoring teammates, jumping in front of other players "shadowing" them, "stealing" the ball from other players.
2. The result of a set or match is only driven by particular players at the consistent exclusion of other teammates. This could include consistent dominance in attacking, defense or serving.
3. Coaches do not engage in tactics and strategies to eliminate player dominance. This includes failing to use a substitution plan which allows all players to participate or failing to remove players who may start to demonstrate signs of dominance.
4. Constant negative communication (shouting, humiliating, blaming) and lack of cooperation among teammates and between team members and coach on and off the field.
5. Consistent lack of engagement of individual "weaker" players particularly in medal matches (opposed to engagement in divisioning) and higher skilled players doing more of the scoring during the final points of the match.

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

- DO NOT approach the players, coach or officials
- Note which Player Dominance example number above was violated and player's jersey number
- Continue to observe and determine if this is a pattern of behavior, or an isolated occurrence
- Document what you observe in the notes section below
- If you think an unfavorable pattern of behavior is identified, contact the Competition Management Staff

### **Important Notes:**

- ✓ Player dominance and meaningful involvement may include or exclude both athletes and partners.
- ✓ The officials on the field do not monitor or determine meaningful involvement, however, they may be asked for input during time-outs, halftime or at the completion of games.

**Sport:** Unified Volleyball and Beach Volleyball

Player Name(s)	
Country (if known)	
Shirt Color	
Comments	

Player Name(s)	
Country (if known)	
Shirt Color	
Comments	

Player Name(s)	
Country (if known)	
Shirt Color	
Comments	

Player Name(s)	
Country (if known)	
Shirt Color	
Comments	