



World Games Unified Sports Competition Protocol

Unified Sports® teams need to incorporate the principle of meaningful involvement. This means that during competition, all members (athletes and partners) are presented with numerous opportunities throughout the course of a game to contribute to their team's performance. This decreases the potential for domination by higher ability teammates.

The principle of meaningful involvement is the foundation of Unified Sports and helps to ensure a high quality experience. Therefore, it is the expectation for all Unified Sports teams participating at the 2015 Special Olympics World Summer Games to demonstrate their understanding of this fundamental principle.

A formal protocol has been established for these World Games designed to assess all Unified Sports teams to ensure the principle of meaningful involvement is being followed. The process focuses on educating and communicating to coaches and Heads of Delegations (HOD) how meaningful involvement is defined and how teams are expected to perform.

The goal is to work with Unified Sports teams to ensure their success in adhering to the standards of meaningful involvement. Qualified individuals knowledgeable in Unified Sports will be on-site to help observe, guide, and monitor and enforce compliance.

On-Site Unified Sports Competition Protocol Points of Emphasis:

- Player dominance and meaningful involvement violations may include both partners and athletes.
- The officials on the field do not monitor or determine meaningful involvement; however, they may be asked for input.

A Unified Sports Evaluation Committee (USEC) member, assigned by SOI, will be on-site to monitor and evaluate the Unified Sports Competition at the 2015 World Games

- Each sport has been assigned a USEC member. The USEC member will work with the Sport TD's and Sport Manager to oversee a process of observing all Unified Sports teams to ensure they are incorporating the principle of meaningful involvement.
- Sport-specific observation criteria will be used to determine if a team is not following the principle of meaningful involvement or if player dominance is occurring. The assigned USEC member may be alerted about possible concerns by Sport management team members, such as the divisioning team.
- Teams will be observed regarding meaningful involvement in divisioning and medal rounds of competition.

Divisioning Round

1. The divisioning team identifies Unified Sports teams with issues regarding meaningful involvement to a USEC member.

2. The USEC member informs the respective coach with the specifics about why his/her team is not following the principle of meaningful involvement, and what needs to be done to correct it.
3. If violations continue to occur, a meeting with the USEC member, coach, and Head of Delegation (HOD) will be held to outline consequences. These may include the following:
 - a. The team will be identified for close observation during the medal round and will be penalized if failure to adhere to the principle of meaningful involvement continues.
 - b. If a team has a number of members who continue to not meaningfully involve their teammates and are of a much higher ability level, it will be placed in a separate division in which only Participation Ribbons will be awarded.

Medal Round

1. If the USEC member determines that the team is not incorporating the principle of meaningful involvement, he/she consults with the TD. The game is immediately stopped, a meeting with the coach is held, and a written warning given by the USEC member which identifies the specific player who is not adhering to the standards. If more than one team member is in violation, the coach will be held accountable. This applies to each game or match.
2. If violations continue, the offending player(s) or coach will be suspended for the remainder of that match/game. A time out will be called and the USEC member meets with the coach. The HOD will be informed of the suspension
3. If a team persists in violating the principle of meaningful involvement during the same game or match, they will forfeit the game or match. Following the game or match, a meeting with the TD, USEC member, HOD (if present) and coach is held. If the HOD is not present, he/she will be informed.
4. When a team forfeits a game, the TD and USEC member meet with the coach. He/she is provided with a written warning indicating if any further violations occur in subsequent games, the team will be suspended and placed in a separate competition division in which Participation Ribbons are awarded. The HOD will be informed of the warning.