



Unified Soccer

Bulletin

2026



**Special
Olympics**
Maine



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools®**



2026 MPA CO-ED UNIFIED SOCCER BULLETIN

(updated 8/17/26)

UNIFIED SOCCER SEASON

September 1, 2026	Notice of Intent to Participate (Click here for notification form)
September 14, 2026	First Allowable Practice
September 18, 2026	Intent to Participate and Schedules Due
September TBD, 2026	4:00pm – Unified Coaches Mandatory Meeting (the coach or athletic director must attend and the meeting will utilize Zoom Join Zoom Meeting:
October 1, 2026	First Scheduled Game
October 15, 2026	State Soccer Competition in Waterville (Rain Date 10/22/26)
October 25, 2026	Funding Application Deadline #1 (Click here for the Grant Application)

Schedule Requirements: Schools are responsible for submitting their own schedules. Teams should play a minimum of a four-game schedule and a maximum of an eight-game schedule. Teams are asked to assure that schools located in their geographic region can fill a schedule. *Schools are encouraged to form cooperative teams with nearby schools.

Festival Sign-up: Any team wishing to participate in a festival should email Mike Bisson (mbisson@mpa.cc). If a school is willing to host a festival, please submit the Request to Host an MPA Championship Event form with how many teams could be hosted at that site.

Authorization: The MPA Unified Sports Committee shall administer Unified Soccer and the rules of the National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS) will govern the sport. All matches will be governed following the [Special Olympics Maine 7v7 Unified Soccer Rules and Regulations](#)

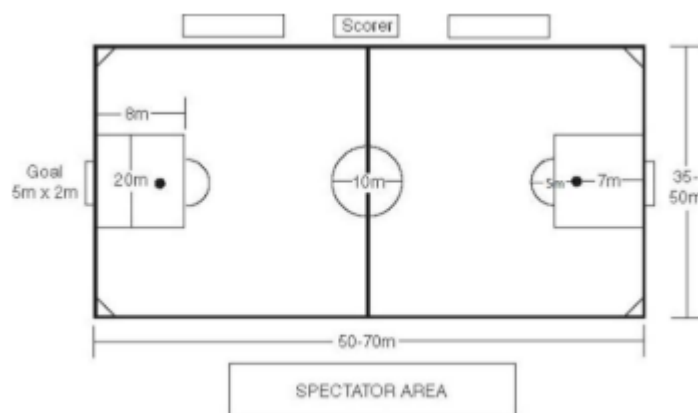
Official Lineup: A team must have four (4) Unified Student Athletes and three (3) Unified Student Partners on the field at all times. The game will end if a team is not able to have the correct number of athletes and partners.

Team Rosters: Each school will be allowed up to twenty-two (22) individuals on their bench and should include an equal number of athletes and partners if possible. This number does include coaches and student assistants. Varsity soccer players may coach but are not eligible to play. Schools that have many participants may request to sponsor more than one team.

Game Ball: A size 5 soccer ball will be used.

Game Length: A regulation game will consist of two (2) twenty (20) minute halves running time. If overtime is used to break a tie, two-five (5) minute overtime periods are used. If the game is still tied, penalty kicks will be used to break the tie.

Field of Play: maximum dimensions 75 yards by 55 yards meters, minimum 55 yards by 35 yards.



- **Goal Size:** 10 feet x 6 feet
- **Goal Area** 8 yards x 20 yards

Uniforms: Each team must have a home and away jersey (may be reversible). It is recommended that numbers be on the front and back of each jersey.

- **Unified Sports Uniform Branding:** With the goal of increasing brand recognition of Special Olympics Unified Sports®, a set of [Uniform Guidelines](#) and [supporting resources](#) have been finalized by SONA. These guidelines apply to all Unified Sports teams in the SONA region. These guidelines are also in compliance with the NFHS sport rules. Uniforms, or a visible area of an under layer, should include the Special Olympics Unified Sports® logo. Logo options can be found on the [Resources page for Marketing and Communications – Special Olympics Brand](#) under Special Olympics Unified Sports® and Play Unified.
 - Order of preference (red as primary, all other colors as alternates; 4-line versions not recommended):
 1. Special Olympics Unified Sports circle logo or
 2. 2-Line logo or
 3. 2-Line logo lozenge or
 4. Special Olympics Unified Sports® in text
 5. Special Olympics Play Unified logo (white lettered logo is included in blank space)

Game Officials: One certified official may be used. They may work with non-certified officials.

Awards: Medals will be provided by Special Olympics Maine at the festival sites for all participants.

Unified Sports Player Development Model: MPA Co-Ed Unified Soccer follows the Unified Sports Player Development Model.

- Teammates of high ability serve as mentors to assist players of lower ability
- Lower ability teammates may not have the necessary sports skills and understanding of the rules
- Rules modifications are made to define player's roles and prevent higher ability players from dominating the game

Meaningful Involvement: All players should have meaningful involvement without any type of individual player dominance. Meaningful Involvement is an effort to **optimize participation by all team members** (athletes and partners) based on the principle that **every player should contribute to the success of the**

team. The composition of any team must include players with necessary sport-specific skills. Teams should **not include players who dominate play, exclude other teammates from contributing to the success of the team, or present a health and safety risk on the field of play.** By permitting any player to dominate play, other players' roles and opportunities are greatly limited. This violates both the spirit and intent of the Special Olympics Unified Sports rules and philosophy and will be addressed according to the standards set forth by each sport's rules and governing ordinances.

- If an official determines that a player is dominating play, that official shall sanction the player and/or coach. Consequences for non-compliance are either:
 - Specific Player Sanctions (encourage voluntary substitution, warning, technical foul, ejection)
 - Sanctions will include warning the player and/or coach, citing the player or coach with unsportsmanlike conduct or removing the player or coach from the game.
 - Team Consequences (forfeiture of game, disqualification from tournament)

Unified Soccer - General Rules of Play Modifications:

- ***The Unified Sports Committee encourages the outcome of every game to be determined by the Unified Athletes and not the Unified Partners.*** In keeping with this spirit, a Unified partner **MAY NOT** do the following:
 - Score more than 25% of team goals
 - Play defense against an opposing Unified athlete
 - Steal the ball from an opposing Unified athlete
- **Ball In and Out of Play**
 - Ball over sideline results in a kick-in
 - Ball over the end line results in a goal clearance or corner kick
- **Goal Clearance:** When the ball passes over the goal line (not in the goal), having last been played by an attacking player, the goalkeeper, standing within his own penalty area, shall throw the ball back into play beyond his own penalty area, but not further than the halfway line (i.e., the ball must touch the ground or another player before crossing the halfway line). The ball shall be deemed in play as soon as it passes outside the penalty area. This rule also applies when a goalkeeper gains possession, with his hands, of a ball that is still in play.

Unified Soccer - Recommendations:

- It is very important that emergency contact information is collected from each team member.
- If possible, athletic trainer coverage is recommended.
- Schools must provide facilities for both male and female athletes.
- Teams should have adequate supervision in both locker rooms.
- **Coaches and officials should meet prior to the start of the game to exchange line-ups and player development and individual needs of athletes.**

CO-ED UNIFIED SOCCER CLASSIFICATION

(tentative)

North	South
Oceanside Morse - Bath	Gorham Portland Falmouth