

# **SPECIAL OLYMPICS GEORGIA UNIFIED TEAMS SOFTBALL RULES & REGULATIONS**

**\*\* All rules concerning equipment, bats, balls, helmets, etc. can be found under the “Traditional Softball Rules and Regulations”. Listed below are the additions to those rules. \*\***

***\*\*A Unified Team will consist of up to 14 players (7 Special Olympics Athletes and 7 Unified Partners or equal numbers of Athletes and Partners for teams with less than 14 players). Special Olympics Athletes and Unified Partners must be comparable in age and skill ability. Unified Sports Teams in Team Competition (Note: difference in Unified Sports Teams in Individual Team Competition such as Bocce or Bowling) require that all players possess higher skill level than Traditional Team Competition. Athletes not possessing the skills comparable to the skills of the Partners are at risk for serious injuries. Special Olympics Georgia possesses the right to remove any team from competition when the team is not suitable for said competition of play.\*\****

Special Olympics Georgia Softball Rules for Unified Team Play are based on ASA (Amateur Softball Association) CO-ED Rules and modifications from the Official Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules Book.

All rules noted on the previous pages apply with the following modifications:

- Each team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the line-up and conduct of the team during competition.
- The 11 ¾” red-stitch (core .44 optic) restricted softball must be used for all players.
- The batting order for Unified play shall alternate Partners and Special Olympics athletes ***and be marked on the line up with “A” or “P” beside the players’ name to indicate Athlete or Partner.***
- Defensive positioning on the field: 2 Special Olympics athletes and 2 Partners in the infield, 2 Special Olympics athletes and 2 Partners in the outfield, and 1 Special Olympian and 1 Partner as pitcher and catcher.
- If you start the game with 10 players, you must have 5 Special Olympics athletes and 5 Partners and must continue the game with this number.
- If you start the game with 9 players, you must have 5 Special Olympics athletes and 4 Partners. An out will be taken when the 10<sup>th</sup> position in the lineup comes up for bat.
- When the EP is used in Unified, the team will consist of 12 players, 10 of whom will play defense and all 12 will bat. The 2 EP’s will be one Special Olympics athlete and one Partner. Defensive positions may be changed as long as the defensive alignment of Partners and Special Olympics athletes cited above is maintained. The batting order must remain the same throughout the game. ***The 2 remaining players (if the roster consists of all 14 players) will be substituted into the game for at least one complete inning of play.***
- Any walk to a Partner (intentional or not) will result in a 2 base award. The next batter (a Special Olympics athlete) will bat. EXCEPTION: With two (2) outs, the Special Olympics athlete batter has the option to walk or bat.
- The **CO-ED LINE rule** will be in effect. The line will be an arc in the outfield, a minimum of 50’ off of the skin line (grass / dirt line). All outfielders must remain behind the CO-ED line until the ball is hit ***by an athlete or partner.*** All infielders must remain on the “dirt” until the ball is hit ***by an athlete or partner.*** PENALTY: the batter may accept the result of the play or he / she is awarded first base.
- The Pitching distance shall be **50’ in Senior Unified and Masters Unified** competition. The Pitching distance shall be **46’ in Junior Unified** competition.

**NOTE: The Special Olympics athlete must receive first opportunity to make a play. A Partner may back up the athlete but can not take over play for the athlete.**

**NOTE:** The Unified Procedures Committee (Rules Committee) will be present at all Unified competition to help assure that the policy of Unified competition is being followed – primarily that **ALL PLAYERS MUST BE MEANINGFULLY INVOLVED IN THE GAME.** If the Rules Committee observes repeated domination by one player over another or by multiple team members, it is their responsibility to bring it to the attention of the Umpire. For the first offense, the Umpire may warn both the player and coach. On a repeat offense, if the domination is flagrant, the player may be ejected from the game. If a team continues to ignore the policy of all players being meaningfully involved by dominating play, the Umpire may confer with the Unified Procedures Committee (Rules Committee) and a forfeit be called. That team forfeiting would receive participation ribbons.

***Only bats marked “Official Softball” will be used. Bats must bear either the ASA 2000 Certification Mark or the ASA 2004 Certification Mark and must not be listed on the ASA Non-Approved Bat List.***