



Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc.
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NEWS RELEASE

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History in the Making in Indiana

Inaugural Unified Track and Field Championship Set for Saturday, June 7

The Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) will make history this coming weekend as its 'Champions Together' partnership with Special Olympics Indiana (SOIN) holds the inaugural Unified Track and Field state championship in conjunction with the IHSAA boys' and girls' track and field state championships at Indiana University.

This championship meet follows sectional competition held at Terre Haute North and Warsaw high schools where the top five scoring teams from each advance to state competition, with **Noblesville** (from the South Sectional) and **West Lafayette** (from the North Sectional) taking top honors. Other schools advancing from the North sectional include: **Bremen, East Noble, Warsaw, and Munster**; other schools advancing from the South Sectional include: **Boonville, Edgewood, Mt. Vernon (Posey), and Plainfield**. These IHSAA-member schools formed teams composed equally of students with and without intellectual disabilities to compete for the state championship in Unified Track and Field.



This spring, schools individually scheduled regular season competitions that culminated with the IHSAA-recognized sectional and state championship. While the IHSAA provided the framework for the competition, including rules and officials, Special Olympics Indiana provided technical support to schools participating in Unified Track and Field, as well as financial grants to a number of schools to assist with startup costs.

"These Unified Track and Field events are a beginning step in the evolving culture of inclusion between the IHSAA and our partners at Special Olympics Indiana," said IHSAA Commissioner Bobby Cox. "It is a humbling opportunity to collaborate with one of our state's most important organizations in the creation of an event that will certainly stand as a historic benchmark for both groups."

Michael Furnish, Special Olympics Indiana president and CEO applauds the IHSAA for its leadership.

"Including students with special needs in these interscholastic sports competitions is historic," he says. "Decades after people eligible for Special Olympics were brought into public education, they now have new opportunities to bring their competitive spirit and positive attitude to contribute through sports to their schools."

The Unified Track and Field state championship will be held June 7 at 1 pm ET. The championship will consist of five events including 100-meter dash, 400-meter dash, 4x100-meter dash, shot put and long jump. Admission for this event will be \$10 and also gains entry into the Indiana Boys' Track and Field State Championship which begins at 3:30 p.m.



Unified Sports® enables persons with and without intellectual disabilities to participate on the same team for sports training and competition. Special Olympics Indiana is considered a world leader in the development of Unified Sports® programs, having conducted the first-ever pilot test in 1989, and since has developed an all-inclusive approach with Unified competition featured in virtually all represented sports.



The “Champions Together” partnership between the Indiana High School Athletic Association and Special Olympics Indiana was launched on December 17, 2012. The partnership evolved from IHSAA Commissioner Bobby Cox charging the IHSAA Student Advisory Committee (SAC) to engage in “servant leadership” and discover ways to give back to their schools and communities. The IHSAA SAC researched options and unanimously requested that an official partnership be formed with Special Olympics as the most appropriate fit, incorporating education-based athlete servant leadership. During the first six months of the partnership, the 18 members of the IHSAA SAC and their schools helped develop the goals now adopted by Champions Together.

The Champions Together partnership seeks to involve a minimum of 50 IHSAA member schools in the partnership. The partnership will provide a banner to all IHSAA member schools that meet minimum requirements in the areas of 1) student-led servant leadership, 2) awareness, respect and inclusion as it relates to all individuals with intellectual disabilities, 3) volunteerism through service to the school and community and 4) fundraising to promote the vision and programs of Special Olympics Indiana and the Champions Together partnership. Special Olympics International is supporting Champions Together as a model program to activate schools through “Project Unify” which also has the endorsement of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).



For more information on Champions Together, contact Lee Lonzo, LLonzo@ihsaa.org.

Unified Track & Field State Finals

Date: Saturday, June 7, 2014. 1 pm ET

Site: Robert C. Haugh Track & Field Complex, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Admission: \$10 per person.

Order of Events

1 pm: Long Jump and Shot Put

1:30 pm: 100 M Dash

1:45 pm: 400 M Dash

2:15 pm: 400 M Relay

For additional information, please consult the Unified Track® & Field section of the [IHSAA Spring Bulletin](#).

Media Information

Host: IHSAA Communications Assistant Toni Polizzi will be on hand to assist in your coverage of the state meet.

Media Credentials: Deadline is Thursday, June 5, 2014, 4 pm ET. Please note that the 2013-14 IHSAA State Finals Media Credential will NOT allow admission to this event as a specific credential is required – no exceptions. Legitimate working news media should apply for credentials by e-mailing (with name of individual applying) IHSAA Sports Information Director Jason Wille at jwille@ihsaa.org. E-mail requests MUST originate from a recognized business account; e-mails from personal accounts (ie: gmail.com, yahoo.com, aol.com, etc.) will not be accepted.

Media Will-Call: Approved requests will be left to claim by the individual at the ticket windows behind the track stadium. Identification is necessary to pick up credentials.

Parking: All parking in the area is free of charge during the state finals except in areas designated by Indiana University.

Media Work Area: News media will be able to work from a covered (though not enclosed) seating area just to the north of the press box along the front straightaway. Ample seating and free wireless internet access will be available through guest accounts provided by Indiana University. Please see Toni Polizzi or Kevin Hankins from the IHSAA in the press box for a guest account.

Programs & Results: Complimentary copies of the state finals program which include heat sheets for each event will be available to members of the media upon claiming your media credential. Results will be posted to the IHSAA.org website and tweeted at [@IHSAA1](https://twitter.com/IHSAA1) shortly after each event both days.

About the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. (IHSAA)

Founded in 1903, the purpose of the Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc. (IHSAA) is to encourage, regulate and give direction to wholesome amateur interschool athletic competition between its 412 member schools. The Association provides state championship tournament series in 20 sports, 10 for girls and 10 for boys. Approximately 160,000 student athletes participate in IHSAA sports on an annual basis.

About Special Olympics Indiana, Inc. (SOIN)

Special Olympics Indiana is a not-for-profit organization that provides year-round sports more than 11,000 athletes across Indiana. The organization receives no federal- or state-appropriated funds, is not a United Way agency and relies entirely on corporate, civic and individual donations. For more information about Special Olympics Indiana, call (317) 328-2000 or visit www.soindiana.org.