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Unified Sports®



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Special Olympics Unified Games return to Slam Dunk to the Beach

Pair of games set to showcase acceptance and inclusion

December 11, 2017 (Lewes, Del.) – In addition to showcasing the top high school boys basketball teams and players in the country, Slam Dunk to the Beach will once again highlight the skills of Special Olympics athletes.

The **Delaware Sports Commission** (DSC) and **Special Olympics Delaware** (SODE) today announced a partnership to hold a Unified Basketball Game prior to the first session of play on Dec. 27 and 29. The games will kick off the pilot season of Unified Basketball in Delaware high schools, and are one of the many fan experiences at the fourth edition of the revamped Slam Dunk that all attendees are sure to enjoy.

“Slam Dunk to the Beach is one of the premier basketball events in America, and we are excited to be able to give these Unified Sports athletes a national stage to show people their abilities alongside some of the best high school basketball teams and players in the country,” said **Matthew Robinson**, Chairman of the Delaware Sports Commission.

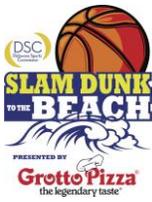
Slam Dunk to the Beach is Dec. 27-29, 2017 at Cape Henlopen High School. Nationally-ranked teams, with some of America’s most highly-touted college recruits, will join a strong local field. The national schools are headlined by Duke commit **Cameron Reddish** of Westtown School (PA) and **Simi Shittu**, of Vermont Academy (VT), who recently committed to Vanderbilt of the SEC. Both are projected as future NBA Lottery selections. Those big names and many more will compete against 18 other schools, including the defending DE State Champion Smyrna Eagles.

Fans can purchase tickets by visiting www.slamdunktothebeach.com.

Special Olympics Unified Sports brings together athletes with and without disabilities (Unified Partners) to train and compete on the same team. Unified Sports emphasizes the importance of teamwork through training and competition just as in any other sports organization.

“Research has shown that through Unified Sports, barriers are broken down and friendships created, and most importantly, those friendships last long beyond the final whistle,” said **Gary Cimaglia**, SODE senior director of sports. “The stories we’ve seen unfold reinforce the positive impact Unified Sports can have on teams, in schools, and in the community.”

Unified Sports opportunities are offered in all Special Olympics Area programs and more than 100 schools. In addition, more than 20 high schools compete in Special Olympics Unified Flag Football and Unified Track and Field, which are official sports of the **Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association**. This winter season, six teams are competing in Unified Basketball as part of a pilot program this season, with plans to make it an official DIAA sport in 2018-19.



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"As our partnership with the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association grows to now include the sport of basketball as a pilot program this year, having an opportunity for those teams to compete on one of the biggest sports stages in the state is an invaluable experience for them," said **Kylie Frazer**, director youth and school initiatives. "It's also an opportunity for Special Olympics to showcase the ability of our athletes, and for the players competing in the Slam Dunk to have the chance to get to meet our athletes and realize how much they all have in common with each other. It's a great example of sports providing life-changing experiences."

For more information regarding Slam Dunk, follow **@SlamDunkToBeach** on Twitter.

About Delaware Sports Commission:

The Delaware Sports Commission, a not-for-profit organization, was established to attract regional and national level sporting events to Delaware as an endeavor to positively impact Delaware's economy. The DSC also assists with the retention and growth of existing sporting events. To date, the DSC has partnered with over 50 regional and national events, paving the way for future large-scale events to be held in Delaware

About Special Olympics Delaware:

Special Olympics Delaware has been changing the lives of Delawareans since 1971. Through sports training and competition in 20 sports, more than 4,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities have proven that, given the chance, no disability is too great to overcome. The mission of Special Olympics Delaware is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for more than 4,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

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