



**Team Building  
Exercises**



Team-building activities are a powerful tool in youth sports—and especially in Unified Sports—because they help athletes grow not only physically and mentally, but also socially. These activities foster inclusive environments where participants of all abilities can improve communication, develop leadership skills, and experience the true meaning of teamwork. By encouraging collaboration, respect, and shared achievement, team-building supports the core values of Unified Sports: breaking down barriers, building friendships, and creating a culture of sportsmanship and belonging. Plus, they're fun—promoting a positive team dynamic that strengthens every athlete on and off the field.

## Team Building Activities

### Human Knot

Divide your Unified Team into groups of 8-12 people.

Have the group stand in a circle with their arms crossed in front of them. Then by grabbing their neighbours hand (or if that is not preferred you could have ribbons or pinnies to grab onto instead of hands) have the group move in and around each other to untie the knot of hands. The human knot game targets communication, coordination and working together.

### Blind Obstacle Course

This trust exercise targets active listening and enhancing the partners communication. Have you team first create an obstacle course together with any PE equipment on hand. Then in their pairs, put a blindfold on one player, and their partner must guide them through an obstacle course, using only verbal instructions. Make sure both students have an opportunity to lead and follow.

### Group Juggle

This a great start of the year challenge as it helps the team learn each others name right off the bat. Form a large circle and give one person a soft dodge ball. That person should toss it to someone else in the circle (have student call their catchers name before each throw). The next person will choose someone new, and follow that pattern until the whole group has been tossed to. For the duration of the game that is the only person you throw too. Participants must do their best to keep all objects moving without dropping any. This activity improves focus, coordination, and teamwork as athletes coordinate their movements to keep the objects in motion.

Tips/Tricks: It is best to know where you are throwing but have eyes on the person that is throwing to you so you are ready to catch.

As the game progresses add in more balls or alternative objects.

### **Hula Hoop Challenge**

Have your entire team stand in a line or circle holding hands. The goal is to pass the hula hoop down the line or around the circle over their bodies without breaking the chain. This exercise requires coordinated efforts, which can foster unity, communication, and a strong sense of team synergy.

### **Silent Line-Up**

Choose a challenge topic. This could be things like birth month, farthest you've travelled, animals in alphabetical order, by height. The task is for students to line up in order without talking. This exercise develops nonverbal communication and teamwork.

### **Minefield**

Similar to the 'Blind Obstacle Course,' set up an obstacle course with objects scattered on the ground. Blindfold one participant at a time and have their teammate guide them through the course using only verbal instructions.

The minefield game enhances communication skills and trust as athletes learn to listen and rely on their teammates for guidance.

Add in a little pressure by having teams start over if they hit an object, or add in a timer.

### **Balloon Tower**

This game allows players to explore their creativity and think outside the box. Divide your team into small groups. Provide each group (teams of 2-4) with inflated balloons and tape. Within a set time, teams must try to build the tallest balloon tower only using balloons and tape.

### **Memory Wall**

This is great for an end-of-year activity to cap off the school year or for teams where most players aren't new. Create a memory wall or bulletin board where athletes can post photos, quotes, and memorable moments from their sports experiences.

Encourage athletes to contribute and reflect on their shared journey.

This activity strengthens team identity and morale by celebrating achievements and reinforcing shared values. It fosters team bonding, nostalgia, and camaraderie as athletes reminisce about past victories, challenges, and bonding moments.

### **Sketch and Find**

Materials: pieces of paper and markers

Each student will draw three things that are meaningful to them.

(Ex: soccer ball, a mountain and video game controller)

Collect all sketches. Then hand them back out randomly. Have students find the owner of the sketch by asking questions and getting to know each other. This activity highlights student identity and helps build understanding and belonging. And can help develop more friendship by finding common interests..

### **Home Made T-Shirts**

Buy simple white shirts and have your Unified team design their own warm up/practice shirts or jerseys by using tie-dye, circuit or fabric markers. Make it a fun and engaging time for your team that is not sport related. This activity is creative and allows for student voice and team unity.

### **Flip the Island**

Using a blanket or tarp, have all students or divide into groups (depending on the size of your team) stand on 'blanket island'. Without stepping off of the island the team must figure out how to get their entire team on the reverse side of the island (blanket). This team building activity provides the opportunity to lead and problem solve together.

### **Without a Paddle**

In their Unified pairs, teams must collect three items from the storage room (ones that you can stand on). Then starting from one side of the gym/space you must work together to get to the other side without touching the ground.

This activity can help coaches find good athlete and partner pairings.