

More than fun and games

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A member of Team Tulane makes his way toward the goal Saturday during the second annual Tulane vs LSU Special Olympics Rivalry Basketball Game. The match took place at Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse on the Tulane University uptown campus. The game featured teams of Special Olympians and students from Tulane and LSU competing for the coveted Unified Rivalry Cup.





Team LSU moves the ball downcourt. "This is one of the highlights of the year for the Special Olympics athletes and the Tulane and LSU students," said Gabe Feldman, the Sher Garner Faculty Scholar and director of the Tulane Sports Law Program. "The game captures the spirit of competition and inclusion that is such a key part of Special Olympics and Unified Sports." Unified Sports is a program within Special Olympics in which players with and without intellectual disabilities train and compete on the same team.

A large and raucous crowd of Tulane students, student athletes, and friends and family eat up the competition. Some chanted "DE-FENSE," and even orchestrated the motion of a wave. In 2015, Tulane launched a Unified College Intramural Basketball League, the first of its kind in Louisiana, and one of the first in the nation. Unified Sports enables athletes to learn new sports, refine athletic skills, experience inclusion, socialize with peers, form new friendships, and participate in their communities outside of traditional Special Olympics events.

Members of Team Tulane show off their medals following an award ceremony and trophy presentation after the game. Later in the afternoon the teams scrimmaged during halftime of the Tulane Women's basketball game against the University of South Florida.

LSU emerged victorious this year, knotting the series up at one game a piece after Tulane won the inaugural game last year which brought together over 50 Special Olympics athletes and 30 Tulane students. The League's third season begins play on Feb. 23, 2018.