



The 2017 IHSA State Bass Fishing Tournament will be held at Lake Carlyle on Friday and Saturday, May 19 - 20. You have the opportunity to automatically advance a boat into the tournament.

The 2017 tournament will again feature a Unified division accommodating up to 8 boats. Each Unified boat will feature three participants: a high school Special Olympics athlete, a high school student peer partner and a non-competing adult driver/coach. The Unified division will follow all IHSA tournament rules with the addition of requiring that 1 Special Olympics athlete and 1 Unified peer partner be fishing at all times. Unified boats are not required to compete in sectional tournaments. 8 Unified boats will be selected to compete in the 2017 state tournament.

Each Special Olympics athlete and Unified peer partner must meet IHSA eligibility guidelines and be attending an IHSA member school to be eligible to compete in the tournament. All athletes and coaches must complete IHSA and school forms and paperwork required to practice and compete in bass fishing.

Schools must provide their own boats and will be required to pay all expenses related to the tournament. **All eligible IHSA member schools are eligible to submit a request to enter a boat into the Unified division but preference will be given to those schools that are already or will agree to become a Unified Champion School.**

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools is a U.S. national program, partially funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of Unified Champion Schools is to activate youth to promote school communities where all young people are agents of change. Components of Unified Champion Schools includes participation in Special Olympics-themed unified sports experiences, youth leadership and a school-wide awareness activity. Participating schools develop a plan that meets one or all of these components. Schools may also engage in professional development opportunities provided by Special Olympics Illinois and apply for grants to support and activate students and staff on innovative projects at their schools.

Having a Unified boat in the tournament allows your school an excellent opportunity to provide diverse students involvement in high school programs. It also allows your bass fishing team the opportunity to guarantee a boat in the event and provide state tournament experience to your student-athletes.

For additional information on the Unified division of the 2017 IHSA tournament or Unified Champion Schools please contact Tracy Hilliard at [thilliard@soill.org](mailto:thilliard@soill.org) or by phone at 309-888-2551. For additional information about the 2017 IHSA State Bass Fishing Tournament please go to [www.ihsa.org](http://www.ihsa.org) 2017 tournament information will be updated as it becomes available. [www.thefuturefishshere](http://www.thefuturefishshere) website provides resources to enhance your bass fishing program.

Schools interested in securing a Unified boat for the 2017 tournament please contact Tracy Hilliard no later than March 1, 2017.