



# SOCCER

## **TRADITIONAL EVENTS** Traditional Team Competition

## **UNIFIED EVENTS** Unified Team Competition

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Soccer shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based on Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) rules, which shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Soccer.

An athlete with Down Syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-axial Instability may not participate in soccer events.

## **RULES OF COMPETITION**

### **UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS**

1. All competitors must have a playing uniform consisting of jersey, shorts, socks, athletic shoes.
2. The jersey shall be numbered on the front and back.
3. Shin guards are required for all competitors and must be completely covered by the socks.
4. Metal studs, baseball cleats, and football cleats are not allowed for athletes that choose to wear cleats.
5. Jewelry is prohibited. Religious and medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.

### **EQUIPMENT**

1. A size 5 ball will be used for all competition.
2. Field width shall be a minimum of 15 yards and a maximum of 25 yards.
3. Field length shall be a minimum of 25 yards and a maximum of 35 yards.
4. Goal size shall be a maximum of four (4) feet high and six (6) feet wide.

### **GENERAL RULES**

1. Number of Players
  - a. The game is played between two teams, each consisting of five (5) players.
  - b. No goalkeeper will be used.
  - c. A maximum of 12 players may be carried on a team's roster.
  - d. A minimum of three (3) players from each team shall be on the field at any time.
  - e. The following lineup ratios are allowed for Unified teams:
    - i. 3 athletes, 2 partners
    - ii. 2 athletes, 2 partners
    - iii. 2 athletes, 1 partner
    - iv. Failure to adhere to the required ratio at any time results in a forfeit.
2. Substitutions
  - a. Each team may make an unlimited number of substitutions.
  - b. Substitutions may be made any time the ball is out of bounds, between halves, after a goal is scored, or during an injury stoppage.
  - c. The coach must signal the referee to make a substitution, and the player may only come onto the field when signaled by the referee.
3. Duration of Match
  - a. The match shall consist of two (2) halves, each 15 minutes long.
  - b. A halftime lasting five (5) minutes shall separate each half of play.
4. Overtime
  - a. In regular season play, ties are considered final.
  - b. In tournament play, two (2) halves each lasting five (5) minutes are used.
  - c. If the match is still tied after the overtime periods, penalty kicks will decide the winner.
    - i. The referee will decide which goal to use.
    - ii. The referee will conduct a coin toss with the winning team choosing whether to take the first or second kick.
    - iii. Penalty kicks will be taken from the kickoff spot at midfield.
    - iv. The coach of each team will choose five (5) players to take penalty kicks in an order of the coach's choosing.
    - v. In Unified competition, the lineup ratio applies to the players selected to take penalties.
    - vi. Kicks are taken alternatively by the teams.
    - vii. The team with the most goals after five (5) penalty kicks is the winner.
    - viii. If, before both teams have taken all kicks, one team has scored more goals than the other could score, the leading team is declared the winner and no more kicks are taken.

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- ix. If, after all penalty kicks are taken, the score is still tied, teams will alternate taking one (1) penalty kick at a time (in their original order) in a sudden death format until one team is declared the winner.
- 5. Start of Play
  - a. A coin toss will be conducted. The winner shall choose which goal to attack. The loser shall take the opening kickoff.
  - b. All players, except the player taking the kickoff, must be in their own half of the field of play.
  - c. The ball must be stationary on the center mark and becomes in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
  - d. No goals may be scored from the kickoff. If the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.
- 6. The ball must completely cross the goal line (inside of the goal) to count as a goal.
- 7. Ball Out of Play
  - a. The ball must be completely over the sideline or goal line (outside of the goal) to be considered out of play.
  - b. Kick-Ins
    - i. When the ball completely passes over the sideline, a kick-in is awarded to the team who did not touch it last.
    - ii. The kick-in will be taken where the ball crossed out of play.
    - iii. No goals may be scored directly from a kick-in.
  - c. Goal Kicks
    - i. When the ball is last touched by an attacking player and completely passes over the goal line (outside of the goal), a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.
    - ii. The goal kick will be taken in the general vicinity of the goal.
  - d. Corner Kicks
    - i. When a defending player touches the ball over his/her own goal line (outside of the goal), a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team.
    - ii. The corner kick will be taken at the point where the sideline and goal line meet.
  - e. On all restarts, the ball must be stationary before being kicked. A moving ball results in a re-kick.
  - f. On all restarts, the player who kicks the ball may not touch the ball a second time before another player touches the ball.
  - g. On all restarts, the opposing players must retire at least five (5) yards from the ball.
- 8. Fouls and Misconduct
  - a. Tripping, pushing, obstruction, dangerous play, or handling of the ball will result in a free kick.
  - b. Yellow or red cards may be given by the referee for repetitive or egregious fouls.
  - c. Two (2) yellow cards will result in a red card.
  - d. If a player receives two (2) yellow cards or a red card, he/she is expelled from the match and the team must play down a player for two (2) minutes. The referee will be responsible for keeping track of the time and will signal when the replacement player may enter the match.
- 9. Free Kicks
  - a. Awarded to the opposing team when a player commits a foul or misconduct.
  - b. Free kicks will be taken at the spot of the foul.
  - c. No goals may be scored directly from a free kick.
  - d. The player who kicks the ball may not touch the ball a second time before another player touches the ball.
  - e. Opposing player must retire at least five (5) yards from the ball.
- 10. In the case of extreme heat, the referee may introduce a water break at a natural break in play, approximately midway through each half, lasting no more than three (3) minutes.
- 11. Coaching
  - a. Coaches are restricted to coaching from their bench area on the sideline.
  - b. Only one (1) coach from each team may stand.